

**AN OVERVIEW OF CORRECTIONS  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECTS ON FAMILY VIOLENCE**

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**By**

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The views expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada.

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## **PART ONE**

### ***PREAMBLE:***

This paper is a review of the projects undertaken by the Corrections Directorate (formerly Corrections Branch) of the Policy Branch at Solicitor General Canada under the renewed federal Family Violence Initiative (1991-95). The goal of this paper is to provide an account of these projects with respect to how they have increased our knowledge in respect to the correctional issues related to violence against women, and the resulting implications for public policy. It is also intended to capture the divergence of perspectives on these issues, and how the Corrections Directorate responded to the challenges posed by this divergence.

The first section of the paper provides a brief introduction that situates corrections issues within the broader criminal justice and community response to violence against women. The second section identifies four areas of research and development undertaken by the Corrections Directorate: (1) Individual differences in male batterers and treatment effects; (2) Pro-feminist investigations of treatment content and modalities and their qualitative impact from the perspectives of male batterers and their partners; (3) Development of culturally appropriate treatment strategies; and, (4) Development of coordinated responses and community responsibility. The analytical frameworks and research priorities of each area are outlined. The third section presents an overview of the specific projects undertaken by the Directorate within each of these areas, and an analysis of what was learned from these projects. In particular, an emphasis is placed on the implications for public policy.

This paper concludes with some general observations about the effectiveness of male batterer treatment programs and the challenges encountered in the development of intervention program and community-based initiatives.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the course of the 1980's, woman abuse was transformed from a "private" or a "domestic" matter to an important public policy issue. As governments began to develop intervention strategies and legislative reforms to respond to the problem of woman abuse, a number of policy issues arose.<sup>1</sup>

### **The impact of pro-arrest charging policies**

In 1983, the Solicitor General and the Attorney General of Canada issued companion policies on the investigation and prosecution of wife assault cases. The federal Solicitor General wrote to Chiefs of Police across Canada, asking them to instruct their officers to lay charges in cases where they had reasonable and probable grounds to believe an assault had occurred. Guidelines were put in place for both police investigators and Crown Counsel. The purpose of this measure was to remove responsibility for initiating criminal charges from the victim and ensure an effective response to these cases. At the provincial level, public education campaigns sent a strong message to the public that wife assault is a crime that will not be tolerated.

As mandatory charging policies began to take effect across Canada and arrest rates of male batterers increased sharply, the criminal justice system was forced to address the question of how to assess, manage and treat the perpetrators of male violence against women. Although the criminalization of wife abuse was seen as an important step in sending a message that violence against women will not be tolerated, there was a realization in both the community and the criminal justice system that it is not enough to charge and incarcerate abusive men. Abused women often argued their partners needed help in the form of counselling and treatment. While criminal justice sanctions may send a strong message to abusers as to the unacceptability of their behaviour, sanctions alone cannot teach men how to live a non-abusive lifestyle. In addition, some Aboriginal, immigrant and visible minority communities demanded a more culturally appropriate and community based response to the problem of male battering.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Linda MacLeod, *Battered but Not Beaten: Preventing Wife Battering in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987) for a fuller discussion of the history of the emergence of violence against women issues and the response of governments.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail* (February 2, 1994) The National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, National Association of Women and the Law and the Canadian association of Elizabeth Fry Societies clarified their position on mandatory charging.

## **Emergence of male batterer treatment programs**

In the late 1970's male batterer treatment programs emerged as part of the response to male violence against women. A recent survey of men's treatment programs reported that 112 new programs were established between 1979 and 1993. (Health Canada, 1993). As treatment programs increased in popularity, women's advocates and service providers expressed a number of concerns. They feared that funds would be diverted from services for victims to programs for men. They were concerned that treatment programs would further endanger victims by inadvertently colluding with the abusers ( see Herizons, 1992). They worried that a "treatment" model would place too much emphasis on the individual and obscure the extent to which abuse is rooted in women's social, political and economic inequality. At the same time, women's advocates and service providers recognized the need to develop strategies to deal with abusive men and to increase the safety of women and children. Some advocates argued that providing treatment for abusive men supports the principle that a woman's choice to leave or return to her male partner should be respected (Dankwort & Austin, 1995). Criminal justice personnel hoped treatment programs would ease the strain put on an already over-burdened system. Some immigrant and visible minority groups welcomed programs as part of a move towards a more community-based response. Although treatment programs had an appeal, survivors of violence, service providers and advocates, communities, criminal justice personnel and policy-makers were left wondering -- do treatment programs actually work? Should treatment programs become an integral part of our response to violence against women?

Despite the proliferation of treatment programs over the last ten years, we know very little about their effectiveness. We do know that a number of treatment models exist based on different assumptions and explanations as to the causes and remedies of woman abuse (Adams, 1988). At the present time, however, we have little systematic understanding of what actually happens in treatment programs. Little research has been done to examine the relative effectiveness of different modalities or counselling approaches.

The question of how male batterer treatment programs fit within the overall response to violence against women is a major policy issue for all levels of government in Canada. Calls for research on the effectiveness of male batterer treatment programs have come from women's advocates and service providers, abused women, criminal justice personnel, and several key reports including Changing the Landscape: Ending the Violence-Achieving Equality (Final



Report of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women) and The War Against Women (Report of the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women).

Within this context, the major focal point of the Corrections Directorate's Family Violence Initiative over the past four years has been research, innovation and policy development in the area of male batterer treatment. The Directorate has undertaken a number of research and development projects designed to increase our knowledge of treatment programs and their effects in order to support policy development on this question.

## **PART TWO: DESCRIPTION OF FOUR RESEARCH AREAS**

Over the course of the Family Violence Initiative, the research and development program of the Corrections Directorate was influenced both by theoretical developments in the literature on violence against women and by the concerns of policy makers, criminal justice personnel, women's advocates and service providers, as well as immigrant, visible minority and Aboriginal communities. These influences led the Directorate to consider the impact of treatment from the perspective of women and children; to develop culturally appropriate intervention strategies, and to support coordinated, multi-disciplinary, multi-agency and community-based responses to violence against women. Projects undertaken by the Corrections Directorate fall into four broad areas of research: (1) Individual differences in male batterers and treatment effects; (2) Pro-feminist investigations of treatment content and modalities and their qualitative impact from the perspectives of male batterers and their partners; (3) Development of culturally appropriate treatment strategies; and (4) Development of coordinated responses and community responsibility. What follows is a brief discussion of how the research program of the Corrections Directorate developed an analysis of the major research questions and addressed critical issues in each of the four research areas.

### **Development of the Research Program**

Initial research under the Family Violence Initiative reflected the mandate of the Corrections Directorate to provide risk classification of offenders and to develop effective treatment programming. Research on male batterers focused on individual differences, particularly the identification of changeable risk factors associated with abuse, and the impact of treatment on these characteristics. At the same time, the Corrections Directorate was influenced by feminist concerns to consider the impact of treatment programs from the perspective of women and children. Feminists raised the issue that very little is known about what actually takes place in treatment programs. They asked whether the messages taught to abusive men were consistent with the goals of encouraging men to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour and promoting the safety of women and children. Feminists argued that treatment programs should focus on accountability to battered women and their advocates (Hart, 1988;

Pence, 1989). The Directorate decided to pursue the question of the effectiveness of male batterer treatment programs, both from a perspective of individual attitudinal and behavioural changes and from a pro-feminist perspective which addresses the explicit and implicit values promoted by treatment programs and how they affect women and children.

The decision to pursue both perspectives is, in some ways, unusual. In the violence against women literature, a focus on individual differences is usually treated as ideologically incompatible with a feminist approach (Kurtz, 1989). The fundamental differences between these two perspectives are the extent to which they believe gender and the unequal power relations should form the basis for understanding male violence against women (Dankwort, 1991) and the extent to which they believe individual differences can account for the presence or absence of abusive behaviour. Although each approach has a different understanding of the causes and remedies of violence against women, the Directorate recognized that both approaches had merit and that exclusive pursuit of either approach would produce an incomplete picture. In addition, this dual approach was considered appropriate because it reflected the differing perspectives taken by existing treatment programs.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, the Corrections Directorate followed two parallel research streams throughout the course of the Initiative. (The assumptions and values of each approach will be discussed more fully in the following section.)

A further consideration that influenced research and development projects was the need to respond to cultural differences in meaningful ways. Mainstream strategies to end violence against women have generally failed to consider the unique needs and experiences of immigrant, visible minority and Aboriginal communities. As a result, mainstream public education campaigns and treatment programs have been, for the most part, ineffective in these communities. The Corrections Directorate attempted to address these concerns by funding projects that developed and evaluated culturally appropriate intervention strategies. A final consideration that influenced research and development projects over the course of the initiative was the recognition of the need for a more integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to ending violence against women. The Corrections Directorate funded projects that aimed to develop a coordinated response to violence against women and increase community responsibility for the

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<sup>3</sup> There is considerable disagreement over the most appropriate treatment content and modalities (Gondolf & Russell, 1986; Tolman and Saunders, 1989). Program influences range from psychodynamic, psycho-educational, social learning, cognitive behavioural and feminist theories. Many programs describe themselves as hybrids which draw from a range of influences.

problem. The following section outlines the major research questions and critical issues that were addressed in each of the four research areas.

## ***INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES***

In 1991, the Corrections Directorate invited an international panel of leading researchers and clinicians to provide input into the development of its research program on the effectiveness of treatment for male batterers. The panelists generally agreed that abusers do not differ significantly from non-abusers with respect to general psychological characteristics (e.g. self-esteem, anxiety, depression, loneliness). Brown's (1993) presentation was typical in that he reported that standard psychological tests designed to measure general mental health problems had limited ability to identify characteristics associated with abuse. Similarly, Browning (1993) reported that many studies fail to find significant differences between abusive and non-abusive men on variables such as traditional sex role expectations and high need for power (see Hotaling and Sugarman, 1986; Tolman & Bennett, 1990 for a review of the literature).

The failure of general psychological characteristics to yield significant differences between abusers and non-abusers led some researchers in the field to turn away from individual differences as a means to understanding and changing male batterers. Other researchers, however, were not satisfied with the conclusion that individual differences did not play a role in abusive behaviour. They pointed to the fact that some men are abusive while others are not -- a fact, they argued, that could only be explained by individual differences. The key, they said, was to identify individual characteristics that were more closely related to abusive behaviour.

Persuaded by argument that individual differences did matter, corrections research in this stream started from the premise that men with certain identifiable characteristics are at high risk for abusive behaviour and that changes in these characteristics will lead to a reduction in the level of abuse. Although the Directorate recognized that the long term solution to ending violence against women must involve change at the level of social values, institutions and structures, it took the position that immediate intervention strategies were needed to deal with abusive behaviour at the individual level.

The research program in this stream was influenced by the literature on rehabilitation of other types of offenders. Recent research in this literature has been more promising in identifying risk factors associated with abusive behaviour. In a review of the correctional

rehabilitation literature, Andrews *et al.* (1990) found that the most effective treatment programs were those that addressed factors specifically associated with crime, such as attitudes supportive of crime and presence of criminal peer groups. In contrast, treatment programs that focused on general psychological factors such as self-esteem, loneliness and social skills deficits were largely ineffective. The Corrections Directorate, thus, set out to investigate the factors associated with abusive behaviour. This research stream used primarily quasi-experimental research designs and quantitative methods.

### ***PRO-FEMINIST APPROACH***

A feminist approach understands the problem of male violence against women as one of male power and control over women, which is perpetuated by women's political, social and economic inequality. This approach argues that it is not individual differences but culturally-based sexist attitudes and women's inequality which are at the root of the problem. Thus, in order to stop abuse, sexist attitudes and behaviours of abusive men need to be challenged and the legal and social consequences they face as a result of this behaviour need to be increased.

The starting point for the pro-feminist research stream was the recognition that we have a limited understanding of what actually happens in treatment programs. Most evaluations of batterer treatment programs have focused on measuring behavioural and attitudinal changes in program participants. As a result, the theoretical assumptions of different treatment models have rarely been addressed. There is increasing evidence to suggest that differences in treatment content and modalities may have a significant impact on the safety of women and children (Adams, 1988; Hart, 1998; Pence, 1989). Programs that challenge men's sexist behaviours and attitudes may produce different outcomes than programs that centre on men's feelings and sense of victimization (Davies *et al.*, 1995). In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that increasing the abuser's self-esteem, without addressing factors such as attitudes supportive of criminal behaviour and presence of a criminal peer group, may actually strengthen undesirable attitudes (Adams, 1988; Andrews *et al.*, 1990) and increase criminal recidivism (Wormith, 1984). Our ability to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of treatment programs is circumscribed by this gap in knowledge. The pro-feminist research stream set out to address this gap by exploring the relative effectiveness of different modalities or counselling approaches to the treatment of male batterers and their impact on these men, their women partners and children.

Research questions that arose out of the pro-feminist approach were concerned with the goals, values, modalities, underlying assumptions and concepts such as safety and accountability. This approach focused on what actually happens in treatment programs and the impact on the participants themselves. What do men learn from their participation in treatment programs? What messages do treatment programs send to male batterers about the causes, remedies, and dynamics of male violence? This stream aimed to investigate how treatment programs made women and children’s safety a priority; why women did or did not feel safer as their partners attended treatment; and how men were encouraged to take responsibility for the abuse. “How” and “why” questions of this kind required methods that could produce in-depth description and analysis and capture meanings and contradictions. Accordingly, the feminist research stream used qualitative research methods.

**Rationale for the pursuit of the two approaches**

Research in both streams is critical to the development of effective intervention strategies to end male violence against women. The individual differences and feminist approaches each address different aspects of the same problem. Table 1 summarizes and compares the research questions asked by each approach. While the individual differences approach asks why some men become abusive when others do not, the feminist approach asks why women and children are overwhelmingly the targets of male abuse (Kurtz, 1989). In order to end violence against women, we need to know the answers to both questions. In fact, the two answers are connected. Individual and systemic variables and factors interact in a complex manner to perpetuate violence against women. We need to develop a better understanding of the characteristics that place individuals at a high risk for becoming perpetrators of abuse. We also need to examine the social values, attitudes, policies, practices and structures that perpetuate male violence against women. By incorporating both the individual difference and the feminist perspectives, the intent was to undertake a comprehensive and integrated approach to research on male batterer treatment programs.

**TABLE 1**

<b>ARE TREATMENT PROGRAMS EFFECTIVE?</b>	
<b>Research Questions</b>	
<b>Feminist Approach</b>	<b>Individual differences Approach</b>
1. Treatment content and modalities: what are the messages sent to abusive men;	1. Are abusers different from non-abusers?

<p>definition of violence; methods used to encourage men to accept responsibility for their violence; coherence between treatment goals and treatment content.</p> <p>2. How do treatment programs promote the safety of women and children?</p> <p>3. To what extent are treatment programs accountable to women who have been abused and women's advocates and service providers?</p> <p>4. What is the impact of treatment on men, women and communities?</p>	<p>2. Are there certain characteristics associated with abuse?</p> <p>3. Do changes in these characteristics lead to a reduction in abuse?</p> <p>4. How do batterers change during treatment?</p> <p>5. Are treatment programs successful in changing risk factors?</p>
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## ***CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES***

### **Immigrant and visible minority women**

A third dimension that shaped the course of research and development projects undertaken by the Corrections Directorate was the recognition of the need to take cultural differences into consideration in meaningful ways. In general, mainstream strategies to end violence against women have failed to understand or address the cultural values, beliefs and needs of different ethno-cultural groups. Increasingly, practitioners have realized that in order for an intervention service to have even the potential for success, its assumptions must reflect the values of the client population that it is attempting to address.

In immigrant and visible minority communities, the roots of violence against women are understood as much broader than the characteristics of abusive men or gender-based inequality. Immigrant and visible minority groups<sup>4</sup> have argued that violence against women needs to be understood in the context of systemic racism and classism. Within this framework, violence against women cannot be addressed without dealing with the other kinds of oppression that victims and abusers are experiencing.

Immigrant and visible minority women may have difficulty accessing mainstream services for several reasons. First, mainstream services are rarely culturally and linguistically appropriate. Women who immigrate to Canada are less likely than their male counterparts to

speaking either official language (Pendakur and Ledoux, 1991). In addition, there is evidence to suggest that immigrant women have less access to language education programs (Annual Report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1986).<sup>5</sup> Second, immigrant and visible minority women may hesitate to call the police fearing that the criminal justice system will respond in a racist manner. A recent Ontario study found that a significant proportion of immigrant women who have been battered fear that their partner would be mistreated or victimized by the police if they called for help. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that many immigrants have experienced the police as abusive and repressive in their country of origin. The same study found that women also feared police involvement would jeopardize everything that was important to them (i.e. their children, house, reputation). Third, the strong emphasis placed on extended family and community in many cultures means that women may feel pressure to keep problems within the community. Women may feel they will bring shame or disgrace to their families if they turn to outside agencies. If a woman does seek outside help, extended family disapproval may isolate her further, cutting her off from her roots and cultural identity.

The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (1993) concluded:

Lack of services, lack of language skills and access to language training, poor employability, lack of recognition of foreign credentials, and immigration laws which make their entry into the country contingent upon their dependent status to their husbands all combine to marginalize many immigrant women and intensify their social, economic, cultural and political isolation and their vulnerability to violence (1993:96).

These factors point to the need to develop innovative intervention strategies which are culturally sensitive.

## **Aboriginal Women**

The work of individual Aboriginal women and women's groups<sup>6</sup> has raised awareness and increased understanding of the issues faced by Aboriginal women who are victims of male

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<sup>4</sup> National groups include the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, and Immigrant and Visible minority Women Against Abuse.

<sup>5</sup> Until recently, language training was only provided for immigrants who were expected to enter the labour market. Women who immigrated to Canada as dependents under the family class or assisted relatives category were not eligible for language training programs or training allowances. In 1991, new language programs were introduced through the new Immigrant Language Training Policy. It remains to be seen whether these programs will improve women's access to language training programs (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> These organizations include the Ontario Native Women's Association, Pauktuutit (Inuit Women's Association of Canada), Native Women's Association of Canada, Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada and the Aboriginal Circle members of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women.



violence. In Aboriginal communities, violence against women is seen as part of a history of violence against Aboriginal people. The Ontario Native Women's Association considers violence in Aboriginal families and communities to be a "reaction against systems of domination, disrespect and bureaucratic control" (1989:8). Colonization, forced Christianity, residential schools, cultural assimilation and substance abuse have had a devastating impact on Aboriginal communities. Violence against women is only one aspect of the socio-economic crisis that is occurring in Aboriginal communities. It cannot be dealt with in isolation from problems such as suicide, substance abuse, poverty, ill-health and unemployment.

For many reasons, Aboriginal women do not have the same access to services as other women in Canada (Canadian Panel: 164). First, many Aboriginal women who live in remote and isolated communities do not have access to transportation or telephone services. Air or rail may be the only forms of transportation and women may not have the resources to leave their community. A woman fleeing a violent situation may be forced to relocate her entire family to an unfamiliar urban environment. In addition, many women are unaware of their basic legal rights and existence of support services. If Aboriginal women are able to access mainstream services, the intervention provided is rarely culturally or linguistically appropriate. Third, Aboriginal women may fear that intervention from mainstream agencies will actually make the situation worse. Given the historical relationship between Aboriginal communities and child welfare agencies, many Aboriginal women fear that their children will be taken from them if they disclose abuse. They may be reluctant to call the police because they are afraid their partners will be brutalized or further victimized by the police. Finally, Aboriginal family and extended family ties, traditionally a strong source of support, may unintentionally be a threat to safety. Aboriginal women's groups have reported that women are encouraged to uphold the tradition of family, sometimes at the expense of their own safety.<sup>7</sup>

While it is important to understand the political, economic and cultural context in which violence occurs, it is critical that these circumstances are not used to condone or excuse violence against women. Pauktuutit and other women's organizations have reported that some service providers and criminal justice personnel have been unwilling to intervene in cases of violence against women because they are under the mistaken belief that violence is accepted in particular

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<sup>7</sup> Squamish Violence against Women Prevention and Treatment Model Project, cited in *Violence Against Aboriginal Women*, by T. Nahanee (Research paper prepared for the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, Ottawa, 1993).

cultures. The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women heard from Aboriginal women across Canada that some Aboriginal community members including Elders and leaders have used explanations of historical violence against Aboriginal people as an excuse to avoid taking responsibility for violence against women. Similarly, some members in immigrant and visible minority communities have pointed to cultural differences and traditional values to minimize the existence of violence against women. Immigrant, visible minority, and Aboriginal women have consistently argued that while violence against women needs to be understood in the context of other oppressions, **no** culture condones violence.

### **Intervention Strategies**

One approach to the development of culturally appropriate intervention strategies is to modify mainstream models to make them culturally and linguistically appropriate. A second approach is to move away from traditional models and to develop alternative, more holistic approaches. The Corrections Directorate has undertaken projects which pursue both approaches. Although some Aboriginal communities have attempted to adapt mainstream models, a more common approach has been to develop alternative, holistic approaches that address the victim, the abuser and the community in an integrated way

### **Healing**

One approach to violence against women has been to address the issue within the broader context of building healthy communities. Intervention strategies move beyond individual treatment towards a comprehensive approach based on Aboriginal traditions of holistic healing. The notion of building healing or healthy communities shares many aspects with the mainstream idea of community development. These aspects include increased involvement, trust, sharing, communication, connectedness, responsibility and collective action (Krawll, 1994). In 1994, the Corrections Directorate funded a research project involving consultation with Aboriginal communities across Canada in order to develop a common understanding of the concept of healing. The report found that, although healing is a culturally based process that differs across language, culture and geography, three key aspects of healing were commonly agreed upon by Aboriginal communities:

1. Healing comes from within and moves outward, often starting with the individual and then moving to the family and then to the community;

2. To be successful, it must address all parts of life concurrently and keep them in balance;
3. It may start from a series of discrete programs such as substance abuse counselling, but must move into a holistic process involving a community mandate which is more than the sum of these individual parts (Krawll, 1994).

Some Aboriginal communities have argued that an intervention model based on holistic healing would bring positive benefits to abusers, victims and entire communities, while transcending many of the limitations of the existing criminal justice system response. A holistic model is based on the premise that both the victim and the abuser are part of the same community and that both must be included in the healing process.

The healing process goes further than just seeking redress for damage done by the offense; it addresses the underlying causes. Healing deals directly with the offender's behaviour in ways that a prison sentence alone cannot. Criminal justice intervention is generally viewed as a painful process with negative outcomes such as: the offender is not encouraged to take responsibility for his actions; he may return to the community more alienated than before; the underlying causes of the problem are not addressed; and the community does not have an opportunity to heal. Healing is also a difficult and painful process for offenders because it encourages them to take responsibility for their problems in front of their entire community. But the healing process is ultimately positive because it restores balance in individuals, families and communities.

The development of holistic approaches, particularly the inclusion of both the victim and the abuser in the healing process has raised a number of concerns. Several Aboriginal women's groups have expressed concern that women's voices will not be heard in the process. They feared that the abuser's need to heal or community interests would take precedence over the needs and rights of the victim, unless accountability to women and assurances for the safety and protection of victims are built into the process. All segments of the community must be involved in the development and implementation of community alternatives. Aboriginal women's organizations are unlikely to support alternatives to the justice system that do not include their equal participation, consultation and funding (Canadian Panel :169). Pauktuutit (1994) has stated that alternatives that do not ensure the safety and well-being of women and children may impose greater harm than the existing system.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF COORDINATED RESPONSES AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY**

Across Canada, those working to end violence against women are increasingly calling for a more integrated, holistic approach. Increasingly, it has been recognized that a coordinated response integrating criminal justice, social service, mental health and community is the only way to ensure the safety of women and children. The importance of developing a sense of community responsibility for violence against women has also been acknowledged. Although Aboriginal communities have cautioned mainstream communities against wholesale adoption of Aboriginal practices, there may be important lessons to be learned from the Aboriginal approach.

“... the Aboriginal approach to healing, which is holistic in nature is **transferable** to other parts of Canada. It is this holistic approach which may be the missing link for other non-Aboriginal communities in their development towards building healthier and safer communities” (Krawll, 1994: 85).

Community development is a process in which people come together to address problems in the community. Individuals in a community identify needs, create a vision, share resources, develop skills and experience and organize for collective action. Community development encourages all members of the community to see themselves as part of the solution to ending violence against women.

Increasing the number of people involved in working towards ending violence against women is not without its problems. Developing a coordinated response to violence against women is a challenging process that raises many difficult issues, particularly around the sharing of power and professional and personal accountability. The inclusion of new players presents a challenge, particularly when they do not share the same understanding or analysis of the problem of violence against women. Clashes in perspectives raise questions about whose understanding should take precedence and to whom the coordinated effort is accountable. Experience from coordinated efforts that have already been developed suggests that these issues need to be grappled with explicitly. If this process of working through issues does not take place, communities are inevitably left with new guidelines that are ineffective because they have not challenged old attitudes and old approaches.

Several projects undertaken by the Corrections Directorate deal with these and other concerns. Projects in this research area have one or more of the following goals:

1. To develop a coordinated criminal justice response to violence against women.
2. To strengthen links between the criminal justice system and the community.
3. To develop a sense of community responsibility for ending violence against women.

### **The Far-Reaching Impacts of Violence Against Women**

Part of the process of developing a coordinated response to violence against women involves examining its far-reaching and long-lasting impacts on the community. There has been an increased awareness of the devastating consequences of witnessing or experiencing violence against women. While these consequences have only recently begun to be investigated, preliminary research suggests that exposure to violence against women is associated with difficulties with immediate and long-term adjustment of children. Exposure to violence against women has been linked to poor social competence, peer rejection, academic difficulties, and contact with social service, mental health and criminal justice systems (Hobbs and Van Diemen, 1990). The 1994 Statistics Canada Violence Against Women Survey produced evidence of what has been called the “generational cycle of violence”. Female children who have witnessed or experienced violence against women are at a high risk for becoming victims of male violence as adults. Male children who have witnessed or experienced violence against women are at a high risk for becoming perpetrators of violence against women.

Witnessing or experiencing physical and sexual abuse has recently been identified as a significant factor in the lives of many women in conflict with the law (The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, Creating Choices ). Based on the self-reports of federally sentenced women, the report estimates that up to 75 per cent of female offenders have been physically or sexually abused. Thus, any coordinated response to violence against women must develop intervention strategies to address the long term effects of experiencing violence against women on specific target groups. The Corrections Directorate undertook two projects that involved the development and evaluation of intervention strategies for specific groups that have been affected by violence against women. One program was developed for youths who have witnessed violence against women, another was developed for women who are in conflict with the law.

## **PART THREE: OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS**

### ***I. CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE BATTERERS (PSYCHOLOGICAL STREAM)***

#### **Propensity Towards Abuse**

The objective of the study, entitled “Propensity Towards Abuse”, was to develop a means of predicting and assessing male violence against women. The researcher set out to discover whether the presence of certain psychopathological characteristics could predict whether men were abusive or non-abusive. Researchers, counsellors, battered women’s advocates, and criminal justice personnel alike have remarked on the difficulty of obtaining accurate assessments of male abusiveness that rely on self-reports because abusive men have a strong tendency to minimize or deny their abusive behaviour. The researcher addressed this problem by developing a scale called the Propensity for Abusiveness (PAS) that contained no overt reference to abuse. The results of this study indicated that scores on the PAS scale were strongly correlated with reports of male abusiveness made by their female partners. In other words, men who scored high on the PAS scale were more likely to be abusive to their female partners. This finding suggests that the characteristics measured by the PAS scale may be associated with or contribute to abusive behaviour, and that this scale may be useful in identifying individuals with a high risk for abusiveness.

#### **Correlates of Battering among 997 Men**

A second study entitled “Correlates of battering among 997 men”, compared abusive men with non-abusive men on a number of personal, attitudinal and historical dimensions. According to the results, severely abusive men were the most likely to report violence during childhood (both as victims and perpetrators). They also showed higher levels of juvenile delinquency, anti-social personality disorder, substance abuse, depression, marital maladjustment, jealousy and attitudes tolerant of violence towards female partners, as well as lower levels of self-esteem and self-control.

Both of these studies provide strong evidence to suggest that there are significant differences between abusive and non-abusive men, as well as lower levels of self-esteem and self-control and that certain characteristics are strongly associated with abuse. This information could be useful in designing both treatment and prevention programs. It could also help

practitioners identify characteristics that may lead to abusiveness, assess high risk individuals and pinpoint behaviours and attitudes that should be addressed in treatment.

### **Attrition From a Male Batterer Treatment Program:**

Although the failure to complete treatment is a significant problem in all treatment programs, programs for male batterers are faced with the specific reality that the majority of batterers tend to deny and minimize their abuse. In addition, most batterers are unwilling to take responsibility for their abuse. Many abusers drop out of treatment programs or fail to even show up. To address this problem, the Corrections Directorate funded a research project which explored factors associated with whether male batterers complete or fail to complete treatment. The study found that men characterized as having relatively unstable lifestyles (frequent changes of address, low education, low income, unemployment) and men who believe that the treatment program does not address their particular problems are most likely to fail to complete treatment. While little can be done to change lifestyle instability in the short term, counsellors can work with men to ensure that they understand the ways in which treatment will contribute to positive changes in their behaviour. The need for congruence between the man's perception of his problem and the goals and methods of treatment is demonstrated by the finding that of the 34 men who denied any physical abuse of their partners, only three completed the treatment. In fact, the single strongest predictor of treatment completion was the self-identification of the need for treatment.

These research findings point to the importance of ensuring that batterers understand the links between their behaviour and the goals of the treatment program. Presently, there is a growing trend to make treatment part of the conditions of probation for all abusive men, without regard to whether the man is likely to complete or benefit from a particular treatment program. The findings of this research question the wisdom of such an approach. The same treatment program may not be appropriate for all men and some men are unlikely to complete any form of treatment. Alternate intervention strategies may be necessary for high risk individuals.

## **New Leaf: A Rural Community Action Model**

New Leaf is a progressive treatment program which uses a community action approach to address many of the factors associated with client treatment incongruence and treatment attrition. The Corrections Directorate produced a report which describes this innovative approach to the treatment of male batterers. The community action approach transforms traditional professional/client or teacher/student relations by integrating community intervention with treatment for abusive men. Group leaders participate in a wide range of activities usually outside the professional roles of therapist or teacher, such as community development, crisis intervention, home visits, and assistance to the men and their partners.

The integration of community intervention and treatment appears to be a promising model for service delivery. The strength of the program is its capacity to intervene with high risk individuals. The active recruitment and community intervention efforts of program leaders allow this program to reach a significant number of men who would not attend or be rejected from other programs. It is difficult to determine the extent to which this model is dependent on a stable rural community. Although the program has received positive reviews from the local women's shelter, police and correctional services, there is as of yet, no systematic evidence concerning its effectiveness in reducing abuse. The program, however, is one of the five programs being evaluated in a multi-site study of male batterer treatment programs that is currently being conducted by the Corrections Directorate (see below).

## **Multi-Site Evaluation Study**

A large majority of the batterer treatment programs that exist in Canada have never been systematically evaluated. The evaluations that do exist tend to suffer from a number of methodological weaknesses. The Corrections Directorate recognized that in order to provide meaningful policy support and advice concerning male batterer treatment programs it would be necessary to conduct a systematic evaluation that compares a number of different treatment programs. In 1992, the Directorate embarked on a major multi-year, multi-site evaluation of male batterer treatment programs. The aim of the study is to identify how male batterers change over the course of treatment and what changes are associated with reduced abuse. Data are



being gathered through repeated detailed assessments of male batterers during the course of treatment and repeated reports from their partners concerning levels of abuse. Subjects for this study have been selected from treatment programs across Canada including Calgary (Pastoral Institute), Windsor (Hiatus House), Richmond Hill (Resolve), Montréal (Après-Coup) and New Glasgow (New Leaf). Detailed descriptions of each program are being prepared based on data collected through interviews and questionnaires completed by the program staff.

Preliminary analyses of data from the multi-site study have suggested cautious optimism concerning the effectiveness of treatment programs. Prior to treatment, the abusive men differed from the non-abusive men in a number of ways. The abusive men were more likely to have problems with alcohol abuse, employment and finances than the non-abusive community controls. The single factor that most strongly identified abusive men, however, was their association with other abusive men. During treatment the factors associated with abuse declined. Both the men and their partners reported a decrease in all types of abuse (physical, sexual and psychological). Although the women reported a greater sense of safety, at the end of the first follow-up period, they continued to feel significantly more afraid and victimized than the comparison group of community women. It remains to be determined whether the women's sense of safety will increase during subsequent follow-up periods.

## ***II. PRO-FEMINIST STREAM***

The Corrections Directorate funded qualitative evaluations of two men's treatment programs: *Après Coup*, in Montréal, and the Men's Crisis Service, in Calgary. The Men's Crisis Service, as its name suggests, differs from typical treatment programs in that it provides immediate short-term counselling for men in crisis. The evaluations addressed four broad areas: (1) the extent to which treatment content and modalities are consistent with the dual goals of encouraging men to take responsibility for their abuse and promoting the safety of women and children; (2) the safety of women and children and accountability to women's advocates and service providers; (3) the impact of treatment on men and their women partners; and (4) program links to the community. A detailed summary of the questions addressed are presented in the table that follows.

<p><b>Treatment model</b> Assumptions, values, goals</p> <p>Definitions of violence</p> <p>Understanding of the problem of violence</p> <p>Solutions to stopping violence</p> <p>Coherence between treatment objectives and actual treatment content</p> <p>Modalities and techniques used</p> <p>Methods used to encourage men to accept responsibility for their violence</p>	<p><b>Impact on Men and Women Partners</b> Do men believe that their attitudes and behaviours have changed? To what do they attribute the changes?</p> <p>How do men understand the reasons for their abuse and what are their strategies for ending it?</p> <p>Do women believe that the attitudes and behaviours of their partner have changed? Do women feel safer as a result of treatment? To what do they attribute the changes?</p> <p>What impact has the program had on the lives of women partners.</p>
<p><b>Safety and Accountability</b> How do treatment programs address the safety of women and children?</p> <p>To what extent are women partners supported throughout the treatment program?</p> <p>To what extent are the messages delivered to abused women and their partners consistent with messages from women’s shelters.</p>	<p><b>Impact on and Links to Community, Criminal Justice and Social Services</b> What are the links between the treatment program and the criminal justice system, mental health, child welfare and women’s shelters and support services?</p>

## Evaluation of the Men’s Crisis Service

The Men’s Crisis Service (MCS) is operated by the Calgary Women’s Emergency Shelter Association (CWES). The MCS was established with the understanding that it must be accountable to the shelter. As such, it has an explicit commitment to placing the safety of women and children over and above the “therapeutic relationship” with men, and to ensuring that men take responsibility for their abuse. The Corrections Directorate funded an evaluation of the MCS which produced a number of important findings.

The MCS is different from long-term treatment programs in that it provides immediate (same or next day), short term (usually two months) counselling to men whose spouses and

children have used the shelter services. The MCS provides: consultation to women using the shelter who request information about services for their partners; intake and counselling to abusive men; contact with women partners (if they are willing), at weekly or monthly intervals, to monitor their situation both during and after their partners have completed the program; and preventive and public education work. Local and national advisory committees were formed to provide support and direction on both service delivery and policy issues. The committees also provided a network for the dissemination of information about the MCS and its evaluation.

The rationale underlying the MCS and its relationship with the CWES is the belief that a male crisis intervention service which operates under the direction of a women's shelter is more likely to make the interests of battered women a priority and provide an opportunity for rehabilitation without jeopardizing the safety and well-being of women and children. At the initial stage, MCS counsellors consult directly with women in the shelter regarding the limitations of batterer treatment programs and the implications for their particular situation and safety. Throughout the program, the counsellors provide women with feedback about their partners' participation. Given that we know that women place considerable hope in treatment programs and that they are more likely to remain in the relationship if their partners agree to attend treatment, it is critical that they receive realistic information about a man's potential to change (Davies et al, 1995; Meredith and Burns, 1990).

The report identifies four key factors that influenced the history and development of the MCS.

- a) The principal players in Calgary's network of health, legal and social services held a shared vision that the best response to violence against women would involve a coordinated multi-level, multi-agency plan that included all members of the family.<sup>8</sup>
- b) The existence of trusting relationships among key players.
- c) Although there was some question as to whether a women's service should administer services to men, there was a recognition that some women do return to their partners and a belief that intervention should not end when a woman leaves the shelter. In addition, there was a belief that intervention with male batterers may have a critical impact on women's safety and well-being.
- d) The socio-political environment of the time, particularly the conservative, sometimes hostile political climate which created cohesiveness among health and other service providers.

A comprehensive description and analysis of the MCS including its various activities, its definition of violence and its goals, produced information about what actually happens in the

program and the impact on the safety of women and children and the men's ownership of the violence. The evaluation demonstrated that safety concerns are addressed through regular contact with women partners. It also showed that strong messages are delivered in counselling sessions about the need for abusive men to take responsibility for their abuse.

- a) In the initial stages, the MCS counsellor interviews the woman about her own situation. She is given information about the goals of the program as well as its limits. Counsellors may also meet with women weekly in small groups. Women are contacted if their partner discontinues treatment and contact is maintained after treatment ends.
- b) Policies and counselling styles are consistent with the objective of having men take responsibility for their behaviour. While MCS's practices reflect a clear strategy not to collude with the men, an effort is made to allow men to express themselves in a respectful environment.
- c) Counselling appears to meet the dual objective of addressing social structural reinforcers of male violence, while holding individual men responsible for their behaviour.

The program has a significant impact on the lives of both men and women.

- a) Many women reported a decrease in abuse and controlling behaviours, some saying that abuse had completely stopped; others reported less physical abuse although other abuse was still present.
- b) Over the course of treatment men increased the extent to which they were willing to take responsibility for their abuse.
- c) Women frequently felt safer and linked this feeling to changes brought about by the MCS. Many women felt safer but at times were still fearful of their male partner. The degree to which men felt their partners were safer varied although some men felt their partners were absolutely safe. The majority of men felt that their partners were safer, but not completely.
- d) Some women reported feeling safer because of changes they had made in themselves through personal counselling, etc. or because they believed that MCS counsellors would advise them if they suspected they were in any danger. However, it needs to be made clear that although counsellors can provide women with meaningful information about their partner, it is the women who are in the best position to assess their own safety level.
- e) Women also cited other factors that contributed to a feeling of safety, such as the decision to leave the relationship, legal sanction, and other community resources.

Other findings included support for the integration of longer-term counselling as a second phase of intervention within the MCS. Many men find problems associated with the transition from one program to another too difficult to overcome and often drop out as a result. One

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<sup>8</sup> According to the evaluation report, this shared vision allowed key players to work together despite significant

unexpected finding involved the relationship between taking full responsibility for violence and stopping abusive behaviour. For the most part, men who indicated a decrease or cessation of abuse, also appeared to be assuming responsibility for their abuse. However, according to reports from some women partners, some men either decreased or stopped their abuse without taking responsibility for their violence. Further research is necessary to clarify the concept “holding men accountable for their abusive behaviour” and the role this plays in ending violence against women.

The Men’s Crisis Service evaluation demonstrates that male batterer treatment programs can be delivered in a way that increases the safety of women and children and is accountable to women’s advocates and service providers. The relationship of the Men’s Crisis Service to the Calgary Women’s Emergency Shelter appeared to be critical to its success. By requiring the MCS to report directly to its board of directors, the CWES established direct lines of communication and accountability. Accountability was further enhanced through close working relationships with shelter workers, and ongoing contact with women partners.

The evaluation of the MCS provides considerable information concerning “best practices” and policies in the delivery of services to male batterers. The MCS model warrants serious consideration in the further development of male batterer programs.

## **Après Coup**

Après Coup is a male batterer treatment program in ville Lemoyne, south of Montréal, Quebec. The Corrections Directorate funded an evaluation which examined treatment content of the program and its impact on participants and women partners. This project arose out of the realization that it is difficult to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of male batterer treatment programs without understanding actual treatment content and the assumptions upon which it is based. Further, it is important to look beyond formal program principles and objectives to assess the extent to which they are consistent with actual treatment content.

The evaluation is based on an analysis of transcripts of 20 treatment sessions and 20 in-depth interviews with program participants and women partners. An Advisory Committee was formed for the purpose of informing the research process and proposing strategies for enhancing the program. Committee members included representatives from Après Coup, women’s

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differences in understandings and analyses of the problem of violence against women.

advocates and service providers, and men's counsellors working within a pro-feminist perspective.

The evaluation addresses five specific questions: (1) How is the concept of violence defined throughout the treatments sessions? (2) To what extent do intervention practices incorporate pro-feminist analysis of power and gender relations? (3) How do intervention practices encourage men to take responsibility for their violence? (4) To what extent do men actually take ownership of the violence? (5) What are the forms of accountability implemented by the program?

The evaluation found that overall, program participants have an increased sense of self-awareness and recognition of the need to take responsibility for their own actions. Interviews with program participants and women partners indicated that most participants have reduced the level of their explicit or physical violence. However, the evaluation also found that program participation has a number of unintended consequences due to the fact that men are receiving mixed messages about the nature of violent behaviour and their need to take responsibility for it. Significant findings of the evaluation include the following:

1. The program did not provide men with a concrete sense of what constitutes an act of violence in practice. Men are taught that violence is a method of control. At the same time, men are consistently encouraged to learn to "control" themselves. This appears to confuse many of the men because they associate "taking control" with using violence.
2. Throughout the course of the program, violence is conceptualized as a "family" problem shared by all its members. As a result, some men believed this meant that their partners were equally responsible for the violence. Furthermore, referring to violence as a family problem has the effect of masking unequal relations between men and women and obscuring the fact that it is women who are overwhelmingly the victims of violence.
3. Program content is preoccupied with encouraging men to take charge of their behaviour and to change their self-concept. However, work on self-awareness appears to be done in isolation from concerns of the safety of women partners and their children. While this work may have some positive benefits for the men, it appears to be at the expense of encouraging them to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour and assisting them to develop concrete strategies to stop it.
4. Finally, the women partners reported that they had limited contact with the men's counsellors and that they did not receive enough information about the goals or modalities of the program. Not surprisingly, they were unclear as to whether the program had taken steps to promote their safety.

The evaluation has already had a significant impact on the program. As part of the research process, the program advisory committee met for two days to consider the findings and

develop strategies for enhancing the program. It was recommended that Après Coup revise its mandate in order to better articulate its basic philosophy and practices, and to ensure they are consistent with the belief that it is individual men (and not the family) who have to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour. It was also recommended that the program improve its contact with women partners and make the safety of women and children a priority in the intervention process.

The evaluation underscores the importance of examining the consistency between program principles and program content. The findings revealed that the intervention process had unintended consequences that did not reflect program principles, and the evaluation led to changes in the program to address this issue.

### ***III. DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURALLY SPECIFIC INTERVENTION STRATEGIES***

#### **A. IMMIGRANT AND VISIBLE MINORITY PROJECTS**

##### **Cross Cultural Perspectives on Family Violence Conference**

The Corrections Directorate provided financial support for a conference to examine cross cultural issues surrounding the treatment of abusers sponsored by the BC Institute on Family Violence, a Vancouver-based community service organization. The conference examined the impact of current violence against women policies on ethnocultural communities, and explored culturally sensitive factors that policy-makers may consider when formulating future policies. The conference was attended by policy-makers, service providers, researchers and community members.

Several collaborative cross-cultural research projects were presented. Major research findings included:

- Communities want sensitivity training for service providers, public education, and culturally appropriate programs for abusive men.
- Comprehensive multi-service interventions and social networks are needed to address isolation in northern Canada.
- Cultural factors that need to be considered in the design of intervention models include: the importance of extended family, spirituality, community and preference for insiders to resolve disputes.

The major issues addressed at the conference include:

- Fear of deportation among abused women who are sponsored by their husbands.
- Stress placed on families due to racism in the workplace and in social services.
- The need to address inter-cultural differences in the design and implementation of services.
- Importance of the representation of women and visible minorities on police forces.
- The need to raise awareness and sensitivity among police towards the experiences of some immigrants and refugees with uniformed police officers in their country of origin.
- Importance of considering experiences of refugees prior to leaving the country of origin, the migration process, and settlement experiences. Service providers need to be aware that both victims and abusers may experience post-traumatic stress as a result of experiences in their country of origin.

### **Assaultive Husbands Program (M.O.S.A.I.C.)**

The Corrections Direction funded the development of a treatment program for men of Indian and Pakistani origins who have been convicted of assaulting their wives or partners. The Assaultive Husbands Program (AHP) is operated by the Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC) in Vancouver. A support program for women was established to provide information and counselling to the partners of abusive men. The rationale for this project came from the finding that a substantial number of Indo-Canadian men in Vancouver are being charged and convicted of wife assault and the belief that existing mainstream programs are not effective in treating Indo-Canadian men because of their unique cultural and linguistic needs.

The AHP describes its approach as a hybrid model which draws from psycho-educational and pro-feminist approaches and incorporates specific cultural values relevant to Indo-Canadian families. Project staff found that, due to cultural differences, the treatment needs of Indo-Canadian men differ significantly from those of men in the mainstream population. Differences that were believed to have a significant impact on the types of treatment required include:



- The strong emphasis placed on extended family relationships means, in most cases, both partners enter treatment with the goal of reconciliation rather than separation.
- Extensive family obligations may lead to stress in the marital relationship.
- Extended family members, rather than outside agencies, are often seen as the most appropriate mediators for family problems.
- A strong respect for authority, which means that the client tends to see the therapist as a mentor or teacher.
- The significance of honour in the culture means that men may be motivated to change their behaviour and restore family honour which has been damaged by contact with the criminal justice system.

The AHP has had some success in achieving its goals. Seventy five per cent of the men who were accepted into the program completed it. According to the program staff, clients appeared to have stopped physical abuse at the beginning of the program. However, no follow up was undertaken to determine for how long the violence stopped, or whether psychological or other forms of abuse were present. The women partners of abusive men were often fearful and unsure of the value of attending the support group. Individual counselling, telephone follow-up, child care and transportation were provided to facilitate attendance. In general, women preferred individual over group counselling. Perhaps the most interesting finding was that, according to program staff, the abusive men often attributed their positive experiences in the group directly to their relationship with the group leader. Many participants reported that they were able to develop a trusting relationship with the leader because of the shared cultural background. Unfortunately, the program has not been formally evaluated, so these observations have not been systematically examined. Future research needs to be done to assess the impact of the treatment model on clients and its effectiveness in eliminating wife assault.

## **B. ABORIGINAL INTERVENTION PROJECTS**

### **Waywayseecappo**

The Waywayseecappo First Nation domestic abuse intervention program uses traditional holistic healing methods to restore harmony and balance in interpersonal relationships. The Waywayseecappo First Nation believed that a program which did not incorporate elements of Aboriginal culture would only contribute to a further sense of displacement or alienation of abusive men. Intervention program leaders wanted to explore the extent to which Aboriginal practices, rituals, and ceremonies are crucial components of successful intervention. The research team recognized that in order to produce a meaningful evaluation of a culturally specific

treatment program, it would be necessary to use a culturally sensitive instrument of measurement. The Corrections Directorate provided funding to the research team to develop this instrument. Existing domestic violence instruments were modified to include Aboriginal values and then translated into Saulteaux (Ojibway). This instrument could be used in other communities to provide more information about the role Aboriginal values and traditions play in effective intervention strategies.

## **Community Holistic Circle Healing**

Community Holistic Circle Healing (CHCH) is a community healing process developed to address the problem of sexual abuse in the four communities of Hollow Water First Nation, Seymourville, Manigotogan and Aghaming. The Corrections Directorate has provided funding for the development, implementation and evaluation of this project. The CHCH aims to restore balance by empowering individuals and the community to deal with sexual abuse in a productive and healing way. Community members and service providers first came together in 1984 to develop new ways of dealing with community problems including alcohol and drug abuse. By 1987, this group realized that the extent of sexual abuse in the community was much greater than anyone had previously thought. The group responded to this problem by creating a multi-disciplinary Assessment Team consisting of family violence workers, child and family services workers, volunteers, welfare administrator, RCMP officer, nurses and community health resource workers. The Assessment Team developed a two year, culturally appropriate, training program. The program covered topics such as: cultural awareness; alcohol and drug awareness; team building; networking; needs assessment; suicide intervention; family counselling; communication skills; and nutrition and human sexuality. Twelve individuals graduated from this program. Seven of these graduates became family violence workers.

Frustrated by the limitations of the criminal justice system, particularly its inability to heal, the community developed “Thirteen Steps”, a holistic approach to healing based on Aboriginal traditions. The Thirteen Steps begin with a victim disclosing abuse. The first response is to protect the victim, and the next is to confront the victimizer. The victimizer is informed that there is a possibility that his case may be handled by the community in conjunction with the criminal justice system but that it is necessary for him to meet the following conditions: he must take full responsibility for his abusive behaviour, avoid contact with the victim, and

undergo a healing process as directed by the Assessment Team. If any of these conditions are broken, the case is turned over to the criminal justice system. Next, assistance is provided to the victimizer's spouse, other members of the family and the community. The CHCH assessment team meets with the RCMP and the Crown Attorney. The next steps involve the preparation of the victim, victimizer and families for an event called the *Special Gathering*. This event brings members of the community together to hear the details of the abuse, to develop strategies to deal with the abuse and to heal the community. It provides an opportunity for community leaders to demonstrate that abusive behaviour is unacceptable and educate the participants about abuse. Following the Gathering, the *Healing Contract*, which outlines treatment conditions for the victimizer, is implemented. The performance of the *Cleansing Ceremony* signals the completion of the *Healing Contract* and the restoration of balance to the victimizer. Although the timing of the Ceremony varies, it is unlikely to happen until at least two years after the *Healing Contract* is implemented.

CHCH's unique approach to intervention has raised a number of questions. Has the CHCH been accepted by the communities it serves? Has it been accepted by the victims of abuse? CHCH starts from the premise that a truly holistic approach must provide support and services to both the victims and the offenders. How does the CHCH proceed when the needs of victims, victimizers and the community are in conflict? To what extent has the CHCH altered social relations in the communities, notions of justice, and understandings of the problem of abuse? What are the implications for the creation of similar initiatives in other communities? An independent evaluation of the CHCH is currently under way. The evaluation will grapple with these and related questions. The specific evaluation objectives are as follows:

1. A detailed description of the program, its development, and how it interrelates with the criminal justice system and child care system.
2. An assessment of the program, as indicated by objective measures and as seen by offenders, victims, Assessment Team workers, community members, criminal justice and child care workers.
3. A comparison between Hollow Water and a similar Aboriginal community in terms of criminal justice and child care involvement and decisions.
4. A qualitative evaluation of the program's impact over a period of time by participant observation with five families.

#### **IV. DEVELOPMENT OF COORDINATED RESPONSES AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY**

##### **Probation Officer Training Manual**

The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter Association (CWES), in collaboration with Alberta Justice, has produced a training manual designed to provide probation officers with skills to run male batterer educational programs and to develop a partner outreach model that is accountable for women's safety. The Corrections Directorate has provided funding for both the development and evaluation of this project. The rationale for this project arose, in part, from the realization that most batterers receive no treatment while under supervision. This is because treatment programs often have long waiting lists, and are generally not available in rural areas. Some men complete probation before they are able to finish treatment. Offenders who live outside the major centres are often unable to meet their treatment conditions.

This project addresses this gap by training probation officers to provide education programs as part of their regular supervision. Where treatment programs do exist, the groups provide information and practical skills while batterers are on the waiting list. Intervention resources are maximized by requiring the men to make their regular contact with probation officers in a group with other probationers who have also been abusive to their partners. Partners of the male batterers are contacted by trained volunteers in order to obtain feedback about their experiences, and to increase accountability to battered women and their advocates.

This project provides a practical and cost-efficient solution to the provision of treatment services in isolated and rural areas. It also contributes to the goal of creating a coordinated response to violence against women by facilitating the development of collaborative relationships between Provincial Corrections and various shelters throughout Alberta. The evaluation and training manual provide information about how this project could be replicated in other locations. A program of this type could become a standard part of probation conditions for male batterers.

##### **Putting The Pieces Together (Quincy Model Project)**

In January 1995, the Women's Action Centre (Ottawa-Carleton) held a two day workshop entitled "Putting the Pieces Together." The Corrections Directorate provided funding for the workshop as well as the broad-based community consultations leading up to the

workshop. The idea for this workshop was, in part, inspired by the success of the Quincy, Massachusetts family violence intervention project. In Quincy, police, women's advocates, service providers, prosecutors, judges and probation officers have worked together over the last ten years to provide a coordinated, comprehensive and multi-disciplinary response to violence against women. Five years after the project began, the spousal homicide rate in Quincy decreased to zero. Ten years have now passed, and not one woman has been killed by her partner or ex-partner. A number of individuals both in the Ottawa-Carleton community and criminal justice system expressed interest in learning more about the Quincy model.

The overall goal of the workshop was to improve the response of the criminal justice system to women who have experienced violence in Ottawa-Carleton. Community consultations were held to identify obstacles to developing a coordinated response, and to identify key issues to be addressed at the workshop. The specific goals of the workshop were:

1. To provide a forum for exchange of information and resources, including a description and analysis of the Quincy Massachusetts domestic violence intervention project.
2. To strengthen links between the different parts of the criminal justice system (including women, front-line agencies, law enforcement and legal professionals, men's treatment programs, probation, etc.).
3. To identify obstacles to a more coordinated criminal justice system locally.
4. To facilitate the development of an action plan for further improvement in the co-ordination of the criminal justice system locally.

A district attorney, a probation officer, a police officer and a victim's advocate from Quincy shared their experiences of developing a coordinated response to violence against women and their strategies for overcoming the obstacles they encountered. Learning about a successful intervention model in another community provided the impetus for the development of new ways of thinking and working together.

Although this was primarily an information exchange project, the workshop and the consultations that preceded it are part of a larger process of community development. Community members and criminal justice personnel came together to identify needs, create a vision and develop a strategy for sharing resources and skills, and organizing for collective action. There was remarkable consensus among criminal justice professionals, women's advocates and service providers and other groups within the Ottawa-Carleton community about the approach that should be taken towards ending violence against women. Relationships established in the community consultation process provided solid ground from which

participants could develop a response model for Ottawa-Carleton. A strong willingness to work in partnership pervaded the workshop. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the workshop was the formation of a roundtable committee by key institutional and community-based decision makers in order to monitor the implementation of workshop recommendations. The round table committee will develop policies and allocate resources for their implementation. According to the project organizers, the inclusion of both institutional and community decision makers, was critical to the success of both the workshop and the round table. This approach may be useful as a model in other community development projects across Canada.

### **From Dark to Light: Regaining a Caring Community**

The Women's Community Action Team, a committee of the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories (NWT), produced a series of workshop resource books that were designed to meet the needs of northern communities. Community representatives from across the NWT were given training on how to use the books. The impetus for this project came as the Council realized that there are many people who are interested in conducting community development workshops, but are unable to do so because they do not have the necessary tools and skills. Although considerable material has been produced on community development, it has been designed for a southern Canadian audience and does not reflect the needs of northern communities. This project is based on the belief that effective intervention strategies are ones that empower communities to take action to address their own concerns.

A needs assessment and extensive consultation were undertaken to determine the topics that were most important to communities. Twenty-two people from five regions of the NWT came together to participate in an intensive seven day workshop. The participants were trained to facilitate workshops in their own communities. They provided important feedback which was incorporated into the final draft of the resource books. There are seven books in total -- a guide book for the facilitator and six activity books. The resource book topics are: spousal abuse, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, support groups for abusive men, parenting skills and healthy relationships. The books are written in plain language with versions in Inuktitut, French, and English. Plans have been made to distribute the books to active women's groups across the Northwest Territories. Additional copies will be available from the Status of Women Council of

the NWT. Written questionnaires have been included with the books to give individuals who use the publication with an opportunity to provide feedback.

## **Family Transition Place**

The Corrections Directorate has provided Family Transition Place, a women's safety organization in Orangeville, Ontario, with funds to develop and evaluate a community responsibility approach to stopping violence against women. This unique two-year project involves engaging men's service clubs to support educational activities and a treatment program for male abusers. This project is based on the belief that individual non-violent men have a responsibility to move beyond their own behaviour and influence the behaviour of other men. The well-established leadership role of men's service clubs in the community makes them ideal players to initiate the process of changing attitudes and to promote equality between men and women.

The goals of the project are:

1. To build receptiveness to an attitude of zero tolerance to woman abuse among a significant number of the male community leaders in Dufferin County and the Town of Caledon.
2. To build a sense of responsibility to intervene appropriately in the community to prevent or stop woman abuse by contributing to individual and systemic solutions.
3. To develop a Peer Support Program for male abusers that will reduce the clinical intervention necessary to significantly decrease the level of abuse in intimate relationships.

A number of activities are currently in progress. Men's service clubs have been asked to make a small financial contribution to the local women's shelter as a sign of commitment to stopping woman abuse. Representatives of the clubs have formed the Men's Advisory Group which works with the Family Transition House. Community leaders are conducting awareness and education initiatives such as conferences for sports coaches and teachers, and seminars for business people on the cost of violence against women. A Volunteer Peer Support program has also been developed. A final report will include a description and evaluation of: the strategies used to involve men's service clubs in the prevention of woman abuse; community education initiatives with male target groups; and the peer support program.

The community responsibility approach is innovative in that it seeks to address the problem at the fundamental level of attitudes in the community. The belief that the community is responsible for the well-being of its members is part of a larger movement towards crime prevention through social development.

## **Evaluation of a program for young men and young women who have witnessed family violence**

In 1992, the Corrections Directorate provided the John Howard Society of Ottawa with funds to develop a program for youth between 12 and 24 years of age who have witnessed family violence. Separate programs were developed for male and female youth. The program philosophy is based on the belief that all individuals regardless of gender, race, class, or sexual orientation have the right to make life choices without being inhibited by physical or emotional abuse. Participants are given a framework from which to understand the emotional, psychological and physical effects of abuse, the roots of abuse, and the ways in which it is perpetuated. Intervention is guided by the principle that all types of abuse -- emotional, physical, sexual -- are deliberate attempts by abusers to achieve power and control. Victims are taught to protect themselves from future abuse, and abusers are required to take responsibility for their behaviour and are taught non-abusive alternatives. Since many of the young women live with an abusive parent or male partner, safety and protection planning are essential aspects of the program. The program model is based on an integration of ecological, historical, feminist and social learning perspectives (Edelson and Tolman, 1992).

The program was evaluated using comparisons between program completers and dropouts, pre- and post-intervention measures, and participant and independent evaluation.

Significant findings include:

- With a few exceptions, completers did not differ greatly from non-completers. Completers, however, felt the impact of abuse was more serious than did dropouts. (This may have contributed to their motivation to stay in the program.) On average, dropouts scored higher on an inventory designed to measure risk level for criminal activity in the future.
- After treatment completion, participants were more likely to identify appropriate strategies for dealing with unsafe situations. Completers were less depressed and anxious, showed less internalization of problems and had better self-perceptions.
- Participants evaluated the program positively. In particular, female clients felt they had developed a better understanding of the dynamics and types of abuse. Male clients felt they had developed a better understanding of the impact of witnessing and experiencing abuse.
- An observer external to the program found a consistently high quality of service delivery.

Program staff discovered that program location made a significant contribution to the success of the program. When the program was brought directly to youths in schools or residential settings, attendance increased and attrition decreased. According to program staff, another factor that contributed to the success of the program was the strong links it developed



with local agencies and professionals who provide service to youths. These links provided participants ongoing counselling and support. Future research could investigate the extent to which intervention projects such as this one contribute to breaking the generational cycle of violence for both male and female youth.

### **Evaluation of the Coverdale Community Chaplaincy Project**

In 1991, the Corrections Directorate provided the Coverdale Courtwork Services with funds to develop and implement the Coverdale Chaplaincy project in the Halifax-Dartmouth area of Nova Scotia. In 1993/94, the Corrections Directorate funded an independent evaluation of the project. The project provides individual counselling, support and therapy to women in conflict with the law who have histories of physical and sexual abuse. Its intervention philosophy is based on pastoral counselling and feminist principles which emphasize acceptance and listening, confidentiality, the sharing of experiences, and the development of personal power.

Few organizations advocate for or provide services specifically for women in conflict with the law. In general, correctional programs and policies have failed to recognize the specific needs of women offenders (Creating Choices Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women). The needs of female offenders arise from particular circumstances such as generally lower economic resources, their role as mothers, and the high incidence of physical and sexual abuse in their lives. This project is based on the assumption that intervention which addresses issues of abuse will empower women to take greater control over their lives and contribute to the prevention of further offending.

Most clients gave the program a positive evaluation in terms of its content and structure, the relationship they established with the Chaplain, and the impact it had on their lives. The trusting, woman-positive environment offered by the Chaplain was in marked contrast to the previous life experiences of many clients. Clients identified positive changes in the way they felt about themselves and the way they related to others. In particular, clients appreciated that both the program content and duration were not pre-determined. These features allowed clients to address the issues that were most important to them and to start and stop counselling as they felt the need. In addition, the Community Chaplain acted as an important link to the outside community for women in the Halifax Correctional Centre.

The open structure, although positive in terms of the impact on clients, meant the resources of the Chaplain and the support staff were quickly over-extended. The waiting times for new clients not in crisis quickly grew to around 5-6 weeks. According to the evaluation, the project needed to strike a balance between a client-centred approach and accessibility to a large number of women. The recruitment and training of volunteers or social work students on placement was identified as a possible solution to this situation.

A second concern was the amount of time and attention given to record keeping. Project staff wanted to minimize the time spent on data collection and maximize the time spent providing services. However, accurate record keeping may provide insights into program effectiveness. For example, records may provide information about the characteristics of clients who drop out of sessions early or do not respond to counselling. This information could be used to develop or modify intervention strategies.

A third concern is the difficulty of doing feminist counselling based on choice and empowerment in a traditional correctional setting. The principles of choice and empowerment are a significant challenge to traditional correctional philosophy based on control. According to project staff, the community-based location of the project was critical to its success. It was believed that an institutional location would have made it difficult to establish safe, trusting and empowering relationships with the clients.

The Coverdale Community Chaplaincy project evaluation showed that an intervention philosophy based on acceptance, choice and the development of personal power was an effective model for women in conflict with the law. The evaluation concluded that this model could be used in communities where the new regional facilities for federally sentenced women are being built.

## CONCLUSION

Research and development projects undertaken by the Corrections Directorate have increased our knowledge about effectiveness of intervention strategies to address male violence against women. These projects taken as a whole suggest cautious optimism concerning the effectiveness of treatment programs. Evaluation findings suggest that male batterer treatment programs have the potential to be delivered in a way that increases the safety of women and children, but that treatment approaches vary significantly. The treatment programs evaluated by the Directorate varied with respect to their objectives, content, modalities, and links to shelters and other agencies. There is some evidence to suggest that these variations are linked to the ability of programs to increase the safety of women and children. In particular, the evaluation of the Men's Crisis Service suggests that crisis intervention that operates under the direction of a women's shelter is likely to promote the safety and well-being of women and children.

Project evaluations may provide some direction on the policy question of how treatment programs fit within the overall response to violence against women. Project findings suggest that the effectiveness of treatment programs is increased by the extent to which they are linked with an integrated, comprehensive network of services responding to violence against women. Projects such as the Community Holistic Healing Circle and Assaultive Husbands Program demonstrate the importance of culturally appropriate community-based initiatives. Three strategies in particular were consistently identified as critical aspects of the response to violence against women:

- In order for long-term change to occur, men must take responsibility for their own behaviour and attitudes.
- Community-based initiatives that encourage community members to take responsibility for ending violence against women have the potential to change attitudes and promote equality.
- A coordinated multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach is the most effective way to promote the safety of women and children.

While these strategies are not new, they have not been consistently incorporated in our efforts to end violence against women. The uneven adoption of these strategies has occurred in spite of general agreement about their merits partially because there are gaps in our understanding of how to implement these strategies in practice. The British Columbia Task Force on Family Violence referred to the concept of "coordination" as a "much talked about,

little understood process.” What follows is a discussion of some of the issues and challenges that agencies faced as they attempted to implement these strategies.

### **Men’s Responsibility**

Project findings suggest there is little hope for long term change if men are unwilling to accept responsibility for their violence. As the “Attrition from a Male Batterer Treatment Program” study demonstrated, even among men who are receiving treatment, there are many who do not admit to their abusive behaviour. Men who are unwilling to take even the beginning steps towards taking responsibility for their violence have little chance of changing. Of the 34 men in this study who denied they physically abused their partners, only 3 completed treatment. The *Après Coup* evaluation showed, even when men do admit to their abuse, there is a tendency for them to see their violence as a “family problem” for which all members share responsibility. Encouraging men to take responsibility for their abuse is an extremely difficult task, but there is increasing evidence to suggest working with men can be a worthwhile process. The Men’s Crisis Service evaluation found that men who took responsibility for their violence were more likely to decrease or stop their violence.

### **Community Responsibility**

The issue of men’s responsibility is also being pursued outside intervention programs in the wider community. The Family Transition Place project encourages individual non-violent men to take responsibility for influencing the behaviour of other men. This project recognizes that men in their capacity as coaches, teachers and business leaders have considerable potential to do this. Preliminary analysis of data from the Multi-Site Evaluation suggests that peer support may play an important role in encouraging or discouraging abusive behaviour. This study has found that the single factor that most strongly identified abusive men was their association with other abusive men. Although the Family Transition Place project evaluation is still in progress, it may demonstrate that men influencing the behaviour of other men is a promising strategy for changing attitudes and values in the community.

Addressing responsibility for male violence is increasingly seen as an issue for entire communities. Several projects undertaken by the directorate stem from the belief that the community is responsible for the well-being of its members. The Community Holistic Circle

Healing project demonstrated that communities can take responsibility for solving their own problems. The Hollow Water First Nation developed a multi-agency response involving mental health, social services and criminal justice personnel in a manner that is appropriate for their community. Two of the projects -- From Dark to Light: Regaining a Caring Community and the Putting the Pieces Together -- were created specifically because the communities wanted to develop skills and knowledge necessary to create community-based solutions to community problems.

As communities are mobilized and the number of people working to end violence against women increases, a number of challenges arise. Community-based initiatives are not inherently progressive. Although demands for change often originate from communities, communities are also associated with the status quo and resistance to change and diversity. Efforts must be made to ensure that the voices of all women, including immigrant and visible minority, Aboriginal, disabled, and rural women will be heard. Communities must be vigilant that their approaches reflect the interests of all their members and not just the interests of powerful groups and individuals.

### **Multi-agency, Multi-disciplinary Approach**

The majority of the projects undertaken by the Corrections Directorate confirm the importance of coordinated multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approaches to ending violence against women. The final reports of Coverdale Community Chaplaincy Project, the Program for Youth Who Have Witnessed Family Violence, Community Holistic Circle Healing, Putting the Pieces Together, From Darkness to Light and the Men's Crisis Service, all state specifically that well-developed links to other agencies were critical to the success of their programs. These projects also report a number of challenges they encountered as they attempted to implement this approach.

Multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approaches bring together organizations and individuals that may hold competing views about abuse, its causes and preferred interventions. There is considerable disagreement among agencies responding to violence against women as to the role of such factors as intergenerational cycle of violence, substance abuse, stress and unemployment and to the role of unequal relations between men and women. Differences in understanding of

the problem create significant barriers to working in partnerships, and these differences cannot be ignored.

Differences in intervention approaches may have a significant impact on the degree to which men take responsibility for their abuse and for changing. Considerable work needs to be done to ensure that all players are working towards the same goals, and that their approaches promote men taking responsibility and the safety of women and children. Ultimately, efforts need to be accountable to battered women and their advocates. Accountability must occur at personal, professional and systemic levels, and accountability mechanisms need to be in place within each agency, between agencies and within the community.

In the past, women's advocates and service providers have been reluctant to become involved in the provision of services for abusive men. Several of the projects undertaken by the Directorate involved the formation of innovative partnerships such as probation services and a women's shelter (Probation Officer Training Manual) and a women's organization and men's service clubs (Family Transition Place). The evaluations of the Men's Crisis Service and *Après Coup*, in particular, suggest that women's organizations can play an important role in developing, implementing and monitoring intervention programs for abusive men. Services for abusive men can either support or undermine the work of women's advocates and service providers. The Men's Crisis Service evaluation demonstrates that partnerships between shelters and men's services can be effective. Close working relationships with shelter workers, ongoing contact with the woman partners and direct lines of communication with the board of directors of the women's shelter ensured that the program was accountable to battered women and their advocates.

## **Lessons Learned**

Project officers and the agencies who implemented the projects grappled with several questions concerning process and effective practices. Many of the projects involved community consultations and/or local or national advisory committees. In projects that involved multi-agency collaborations, considerable time was spent developing guiding principles, new partnerships and accountability mechanisms. Given the considerable time and effort they take, are these approaches worthwhile? An analysis of the project findings suggests that these approaches are effective practices that should be continued and further developed.

- Community consultations, advisory committees and other processes that promote dialogue between agencies and individuals are critical to the success of any project. Although these processes are often lengthy and at times difficult, they are extremely worthwhile. It is essential that all players are working in the same direction, towards the same goals.
- Given the competing views on the causes and remedies of violence against women and the implications for safety, it is essential that the principles, policies and practices of agencies and programs are clearly spelled out. This process provides a starting point for dialogue and the basis from which to build partnerships and relations of trust.
- Although women's advocates and service providers have many reasons to be hesitant, partnership with men's services have the potential to increase the safety and well-being of women and children. Explicitly stated guiding principles may help ensure that the expertise of women's advocates and service providers is respected, and safety is a priority.
- For over twenty years women have gained considerable skills and knowledge in the area of providing services and advocating for women. Through contact with women whose partners are in treatment, front-line workers have gained an understanding of which approaches will promote the safety of women and children and which ones have unintended, potentially dangerous consequences for women. Coordinated multi-agency, multi-disciplinary efforts should recognize this experience and ensure that they are accountable to abused women and their advocates.

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