

Final Report
Violence Prevention Initiative
Violence Awareness Action Training Pilot Project

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Report Prepared by:
Bobbie Boland RSW
270 Indian Meal Line
Torbay, NF
A1K 1B4

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Table Of Contents

1.0	Context	1
2.0	Summary of Activities	3
3.0	Level of Participation	4
4.0	Format and Structure of the Violence Awareness Action Training	5
4.1	Workshop Format:	5
4.2	Group Diversity	6
5.	Pre/post training	7
6.0	Criteria for certification of trainers	8
6.1	Further Implementation in Regions	9
7.0	Recommendations:	10
	Violence Awareness & Action Training Format and Structure	10
	VAAT Implementation	10
	Departmental Commitment to Trainers	11
	Pre/Post Assessment	12
	Ongoing support to the VAAT trainers	12

Appendices:

- A. Participants list, Phase I Pilot, April 2001
- B: Participants list, Phase II Pilot, Jan-March 2002
- C: Participants List according to Department
- D: Evaluation responses

1.0 Context

The Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI), building upon the former Provincial Strategy Against Violence, is a multi-agency, community-government partnership, co-ordinated by Women's Policy Office, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The VPI mandate is to seek long term solutions to the problems of violence experienced by women, children, elders and other vulnerable groups. The training module, Violence Awareness Action Training (VAAT) was prepared to address the need for various levels of training about violence awareness in the public service and in the community. A second component of the pilot consisted of a day long Train the Trainer session. There is no expectation that VAAT Train the Trainer session, will be offered again.

Background

Basic research for VAAT was conducted during the Provincial Strategy Against Violence. The final learning package and process was developed in consultation with the Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC) of the VPI and approved in principle in February 2001. The PCC comprises representatives from the six regional coordinating committees of the VPI, the partner departments of the VPI, and four pan-provincial organizations. (The latter were not members in 2001)

The overall learning goal of VAAT was to increase the sensitivity and awareness of participants to the factors contributing to violence and the impact of violence on women, children, elders and other vulnerable groups. The training was designed as a basic overview of the issues associated with violence prevention. The primary targets for the training were employees of the four partner departments of the VPI, though participants from community-based agencies also attended. One of the important components of the VAAT endorsed by the PCC was that it would be an inter-departmental- community model delivered at a regional level. It was expected that this model would provide a forum for inter-departmental and community networking.

Phase I

The first pilot was delivered in April 2001 to 26 participants in the St. John's region. Following this pilot there was a period in which learning materials were revised and modifications made to the program. A post-training survey with participants was conducted in August 2001 and a report of the results was circulated to all participants in

September 2001. One of the areas questioned in the evaluation was the use of the pre and post assessment component of the program. This assessment was designed to engage participants and their supervisors in joint planning and discussion such that the training became an integral part of the work of participants. It was determined through the Phase I evaluation that sufficient time had not been allowed for this process to be productive and satisfying. It was agreed that department officials needed greater advance time to prepare for Phase II of the delivery.

Phase II of the pilot consisted of the delivery of six additional pilots throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. A planning meeting was held with the training managers of partner departments in July 2001. At that time it was agreed the respective training managers would take responsibility for promoting the VAAT to regional managers so as to have good lead time for selection of appropriate trainees. Women's Policy Office took responsibility for preparing materials, hiring the consultant, and coordinating the administration associated with the training. The training sessions were planned for the late fall and early winter 2001-2002 as outlined in the VPI Action Plan.

Phase II

The Consultant for Phase II was contracted by the VPI in November 2001 as Lead Trainer for a series of Regional VAAT workshops to be completed by March 31, 2002. The regional VAAT sessions consisted of the one day course and a second day Train the Trainer workshop aimed to prepare future trainers to provide in-service sessions in the department and in the region. Each department was asked to identify four participants, for each of the six regions, to attend the training. Since the individuals who attended the Train the Trainer session must have also completed the Violence Awareness Action Training Day1, the same individuals necessarily attended both days. (some exceptions)

At the beginning of Phase II (December 2001) letters of introduction were sent to identified senior departmental officials with the request to forward the introductory materials to managers or training co-ordinators who co-ordinated training for the department or organization. The preliminary information provided background to the training sessions as well as guidelines which may assist in the selection of trainees. Generally speaking a number of further contacts were made in order to identify and prepare participants.

This report constitutes a summary of the activities and reporting on the main points as requested in the Phase II Terms of Reference for the Consultant.

2.0 Summary of Activities

Deliverables:

- Regular consultation with Mona Wall, Manager of the VPI
- Consultation with government representatives on the VPI and departmental training officers
- Written, electronic and in-person meetings with regional representatives to help identify appropriate participants for VAAT workshops
- Survey of apprentice trainers from April 2001 workshops
- Communication with identified participants and supervisors regarding pre and post assessment and other VAAT concerns
- Twelve workshops days in six regions of the province
- Editing of Facilitators and Participant Manuals
- Development of process notes for facilitator use (incorporated into facilitator manual)
- Preparation and co-facilitation with total of seven apprentice trainers
- Compilation of examples of all written and electronic correspondence; participation lists consisting of mailing addresses, email contacts, phone numbers and supervisors. Data is desegregated regionally and departmentally.
- Maintenance of a waiting list for future offering of the workshops
- Summary of VAAT workshop evaluations
- Post workshop email consultation with participants regarding input and recommendations
- preparation of final report and recommendations

3.0 Level of Participation

Violence Awareness Action Training Workshops January - March 2002

Region	Number of participants Day1/2	Human Resources & Employment	Justice	Health and Community Services	Education	Community
Labrador	16/15	2	4	4	2	4
Northern	15/12	4	2	4	2	3
Western	23/23	4	7	4	2	3
Central	17/17	2	4	3	5	3
Eastern	13/12	2	6	2	2	4
St. John's	18/18	5	4	3	4	2

Total # of Participants	102/97 Males = 15 females=87	19	27	20	17	19
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Opportunity for co-facilitation	7	1	2	1	1	2
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VAAT April 2001

Number of participants day1/2	26/15	4/2	9/7	5/1	3/2	5/3
Phase I & II totals	128/112	22	36	25	20	24

Note:

*The Department of Justice participants include eleven RCMP officers.

* 7/19 community representatives were also departmental employees

* efforts were made to identify co-trainers who had provincial or regional responsibilities

4.0 Format and Structure of the Violence Awareness Action Training

4.1 Workshop Format:

The VAAT workshop is designed as a facilitated process, one that encourages:

- participants to increase their awareness,
- explore the subject matter through reflection and exercises,
- relate to their own experience,
- question assumptions,
- make connections between interpersonal violence and societal realities and
- make action plans to which they are committed.

This is a different kind of process than an information sharing opportunity where participants aim to gain increased knowledge over a subject matter and the facilitator's goal is to sufficiently cover particular information.

The pilot workshop, as developed, allocated one day for the training and has additional modules on violence against persons with disabilities, elder abuse and child abuse if sufficient time is available. It became evident at the start of the pilot that it was not possible to include these options in Day 1. In order to cover the essential material, which is primarily an experiential learning process, the additional options would have to be covered in a second day.

Violence as a gendered problem is a core module of the workshop and sets up the critical thinking and analysis for the other forms of abuse. Along with gendered violence, Day 1 covers the dynamics of violence and links those dynamics to the societal picture. For future implementation, it is recommended the VAAT workshop be a two day workshop. In order to have adequate time for discussion, group size should not exceed 16 participants. The consultant has constructed separate agendas such that Day 1 has a stand alone agenda. However, this is done with the understanding that Day 1 participants will complete Day 2 at a later date. Without two days the course appears to focus primarily on violence against women. Those participants who do not complete the entire workshop will have major gaps in knowledge on elder abuse, child abuse and abuse of individuals with disabilities.

During the pilot, due to time limitations, the additional components were not delivered. As such they have not received the detailed attention, in presentation and editing, given

the Day1 components. The three modules follow the same rhythm as some other modules, that is: introduce the topic, engage participants in relating it to their own experience, considering the facts (statistics), a video and subsequent discussion.

In considering the challenge of bringing this workshop back to their constituencies, participants, particularly those who work in facilities where there are shift workers, felt they may need to consider doing it differently, such as offering 60 minute segments. They felt this was the only real way to offer the workshop to shift workers. In a post workshop survey some reported that they felt the workshop could be done in one day as staff were familiar with the subject and did not need the explanations and exploration to the extent it exists in the workshop format. These comments suggest that the participants tended to consider providing the VAAT workshop as “information sharing” as opposed to a process of “increasing awareness” and “identifying actions” at the individual, agency and community level. The proven value and strength of a process oriented workshop suggests strongly the focus of the VAAT workshop as primarily process not content should be maintained.

4.2 Group Diversity

The VAAT pilot Train the Trainer was conceived as an opportunity to create trainers who would encourage inter-departmental and collaborative actions with the community by providing the workshops regionally. On the provincial scene community capacity building is high on the priority list in regions. The VAAT offers another vehicle to achieve this aim internally to departments and agencies. The opportunity to network and the diversity of the group composition/experience were consistently identified by participants as being the most influential factors that contributed to and enhanced learning and increased awareness. One participant stated “maintaining group diversity will enhance what people get out of this workshop by 200%”. Another participant said, “this was the best inter-departmental event I ever attended. All departments were represented”.

Clearly, workshop groups which are not diverse will result in a weaker course, a more limited opportunity and has the potential to encourage limiting thought. Given the considerable effort and cost of departments to have employees attend the VAAT, it stands to reason that the departments should optimize the opportunity, create the strongest possible influence that will have a positive impact on the workforce and subsequently have a positive impact on client services.

The philosophy of the VAAT project is that co-facilitation, using a female and male co-presenter is the standard. Only two of the six pilot workshops were co-facilitated by a male and female presenter. Given that the lead trainer was female it was necessary to also provide opportunities for female co-presenters. However, even though the request to departments suggested identifying male and female participants for the Train the Trainer workshops only 15/102 participants were male. It remains an area for further development.

The workshop content and participation needs to be considered in terms of cultural diversity. Unfortunately the LIHC, Innu Nation and Metis Association were not involved in supporting the pilot training. The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs' participant for the Labrador workshop unfortunately could not attend due to health reasons. Given that LIHC and the Innu nation will be taking over the delivery of many services in the region, further consultation with these groups is necessary.

5. Pre/post training

Once participants had been identified and registration forms completed those individuals identified as trainees for VAAT were sent (via email or fax) a Pre and Post Training Assessment. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the training, the immediate supervisors of trainees were also sent the same information and asked to use the following points as a basis for discussion with the participants prior to the workshop:

- how this training fits with the mandate of their department or organization
- their goals for the workshop and
- their commitment to training for violence prevention.

Following the training, supervisors were asked

- to address any questions the trainee may have arising from the workshop
- to discuss with the trainees any suggestions on how training can be used (inter/intra departmentally)
- identify any recommendations for future training needs for the Violence Prevention Initiative.

The Pre and Post assessments were not widely used by participants: Day 1(N=39/102) and Day2(n=59/87). One might assume that, given this was a train the trainer process, those who completed the pre/post assessment generally completed it with regards to the Trainer piece as opposed to the VAAT workshop itself. Departments had obviously not

identified prospective trainees prior to receiving notification of the workshop dates and as such the limited window of preparation time between receiving the information about the workshops and the implementation was a deterrent. In subsequent sessions some participants were also not identified by the departments early enough to give due attention to the pre/post assessment, some others were unaware the exercise was requested while for others personal and supervisor work schedules did not permit the necessary allocation of time. The feedback from those who completed the exercise in the manner it which it was intended suggested it was a worthwhile exercise both in focussing personal attention and in encouraging the agency/organization to plan for future training. Some participants were frustrated by the fact that, as individuals, they had no power to plan for future training nor did the immediate supervisor who completed the assessment. This experience obviously compromised the value of the pre/post assessment.

Time constraints did not allow for pre/post workshop contact with supervisors. Therefore the value of this exercise, from the supervisory perspective, is unknown. Some participants were unsure regarding whether they would receive support from their agency/department to offer the workshops in future. Some participants reported that neither they, nor their supervisors, were aware of plans to move forward with this initiative. In addition, there is no direction as to where or how those issues identified by the pre/post assessment might be addressed by the supervisors or brought forward by the supervisors to managers etc where they could influence policy or practices.

6.0 Criteria for certification of trainers

Certification suggests a formal process of preparation and assessment. Participants in this pilot project, with varying degrees of training experience and knowledge of the subject matter, attended a two day Violence Awareness Action Training workshop. The workshop covered only half of the recommended material and included a one day Train the Trainers course. The Train the Trainers session examined the structure of the course, the layout of the manuals and limited examination of facilitation skills.

Seven individuals had the opportunity to co-facilitate the workshops a second time. The structure of the workshops do not permit opportunity for the Lead Trainer to assess skills or provide feedback to participants.

The VAAT initiative, with its aim to inform government workers and encourage interdepartmental and community collaboration has some similarities with the ISSP

process and the Plan for Co-ordination of Services to Children. However, it does not have nearly the resources allocated to that particular initiative. The consultant spoke with Don Hayes, Co-ordinator of ISSP training provincially, to ascertain some of the pertinent learning from the development, implementation and ongoing support of the provincial ISSP training initiative. Mr. Hayes feedback was solid and rings true for the VAAT initiative. Those applicable to the VAAT are noted in the Recommendations section of this report.

Participants reported that they would benefit from opportunities to develop greater skills in facilitation such as keeping things on track and on time; being able to think on your feet; remaining neutral; dealing with resistance and being respectful of people who think differently. They also reported that it would be important to have mentoring support. The Center for Learning and Development, in particular Ron Cashin, has previously been involved in an initiative aimed to create and support developing trainers throughout the province. From the perspective of years of practise in the area and actual experience in supporting a group of regional trainers, Mr. Cashin was able to articulate the components of a structured plan for supporting apprentice trainers. Those applicable to the VAAT are noted in the Recommendations section of this report.

6.1 Further Implementation in Regions

The experience of the ISSP supports the need for a central contact person through whom trainers can discuss ideas, ask questions or seek direction for presenting workshops. When things don't go well this contact person could offer some guidance, provide suggestions for altering and improving the workshop and/or manual and so on. This person could also keep track of active trainers in the various regions, how many workshops they have each presented and with which co-facilitator.

Participants were concerned that they would not be allowed sufficient time to prepare to facilitate the workshop. This would have a serious impact on the quality of the workshops, the comfort, confidence and satisfaction of the apprentice trainer and overall learning experience of participants. Some others expressed concern about the workload and absence from the office that the expectation of co-facilitating workshops implied. They wondered if this would result in a deterioration of relationships within their workplaces since it would mean co-workers, who are already busy, are required to take up the slack.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

Violence Awareness & Action Training Format and Structure

Recommendation 1: The content of the Violence Awareness Action Training necessitates a two day time frame. The workshop is best presented in two consecutive days. However, Day 1 has a stand alone agenda if consecutive days are not possible. It should be noted that while a two day workshop is recommended in order to cover the components, the workshop being recommended has not in fact been offered during the pilot. Time constraints and the fact that the pilot had a Train the Trainer session which needed to be covered resulted in a lack of opportunity to actually deliver the VAAT workshop to a general workforce group as opposed to individuals assumed to be committed, open and informed.

Recommendation 2: The workshop should be available to all staff. While there are decided logistical and financial implications in shift oriented environments where positions need to be backfilled, it would be unfair that those workers not be permitted to also be informed by the “experience” of the workshop. In addition, institutional workers benefit, probably even more than most, from the opportunity to network and hear the perspective and experience of those who work in other departments and community agencies.

VAAT Implementation

Recommendation 3: VPI partner departments commit to collaborative work in the regions, sharing resources and offering workshops to diverse groups, including community representatives. The feedback from participants confirms this has a profound impact on the learning of the group. Given the considerable effort and cost of departments to have employees attend the VAAT, it stands to reason that they should be optimize the opportunity and create the strongest possible influence that will have a positive impact on the workforce and subsequently have a positive impact on client services.

Recommendation 4: That the VPI consult with Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs about the need to adapt the curriculum in order to respectfully represent the needs, realities and sensitivities of Aboriginal people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Recommendation 5: It is crucial to have a plan for training in the regions after the train the trainer. The VPI and in particular the partner departments need to be precise and clear about the follow up expected from regions and from apprentice trainers. Without a clear implementation plan, with timely opportunities for apprentice trainers to use what they have learned, the efforts of the pilot will be seriously compromised.

Recommendation 6: The VPI co-ordinating committee clearly define who in the region will take responsibility for planning to train. In the example of the ISSP, the regional training teams provide the impetus and ongoing support. This group plans and carries out the ongoing in-service training. For example the Child Health Co-ordinator position is key to the ISSP training initiative. The VPI partner departments should consider appointing an individual regionally who will plan and implement collaboratively.

Recommendation 7: The inter-departmental composition of both the facilitator team and the participant group is vital and as such it would serve the VPI and the departments well to continue this process.

Departmental Commitment to Trainers

Recommendation 8: Prior to co-facilitating a workshop, trainers have a minimum of three days preparation time in order to familiarize themselves with the workshop format from the facilitators perspective, meet with co-facilitators to plan, consult with a mentor etc.

Recommendation 9: Individuals who trained as VAAT facilitators have diverse backgrounds in training and the field of violence prevention. Those

who could benefit from additional training in facilitation skills and related training in adult education principles should be given the opportunity to avail of this training through their respective department or agency.

Recommendation10: Apprentice trainers have an opportunity to co-facilitate with an experienced facilitator prior to facilitating.

Pre/Post Assessment

Recommendation11: The Pre/post assessment should be continued and efforts made to build commitment to its use and learn from the information identified. The Pre/Post assessment, when used appropriately, is a valuable tool. It helps the participant focus on the subject matter and has a positive impact on the learning opportunity..

Recommendation12: Supervisors, who completed the pre/post assessment be polled as to the value of the pre/post test from their perspective and ways in which it might be strengthened. eg. are the supervisors able to make necessary commitments or knowledgeable about the overall initiative.

Recommendation13: In order to optimize the benefit to individuals and departments, a line of communication must be implemented whereby those issues identified by the pre/post assessment might be addressed by the supervisors or brought forward by the supervisors to managers etc where they could influence policy or practices.

Recommendation14 VAAT facilitators will need ongoing and periodic training as trainers to keep on top of the workshops, any new developments in the field and new facilitation skills, especially for those of us who may not present workshops frequently.

Ongoing support to the VAAT trainers:

Recommendation15 The VPI consider including a section on the VAAT program in its website. This site could have two distinct sections. One section

could include general information on the VAAT and its progress. The other section would be a chat room specifically for the VAAT facilitators which would include new information, presentation materials, and an interactive chat line whereby facilitators could share practice wisdom and support each others.

A newsletter is another way of keeping in contact, 3-4 per year, would include FAQ's, inserts for training manuals. The responsibility for these tasks would need to be clearly allocated and resources.

The VPI plan for yearly up-dates/ refreshers for trainers. This has proved have been very important process for supporting the ISSP training.

Recommendation16: That each region identify a cohort (s) of apprentice trainers consisting of no more than 6-8 persons who will be supported by a mentor. The process must include a development plan for them - specifically points to build confidence and competence. Following participation in a workshop the mentor should call to go over feedback forms; go over pointers about how to get useful feedback; facilitate the feedback ; what helped learning? should be continued? what could be done differently to better support learning?

Recommendation17: The VAAT material requires experience and understanding of the content and expertise in facilitation of group process. It is recommended that, prior to any delivery o the VAAT, facilitators in regions meet as a group. This meeting would be an opportunity to discuss the delivery of the VAAT, and to become more familiar with the content of the new two day format. Further, that individuals identify a progressive developmental process for apprenticing as trainers. This might mean for some that they would take responsibility for 30% in their first delivery o f VAAT, and 50% in their second. It is also recommended that apprenticing trainers have a mentor available for debriefing.

Recommendation18 Trainers are directed to hold to the content that is in the curriculum and not make changes.

Overall support to VAAT

Recommendation19: The VAAT initiative needs significant support over the next year in order to achieve the goals set by the VPI. At a minimum a half time staff person and more likely a full time person dedicated to the VAAT project is required. This person would be responsible for:

- providing experienced co-facilitation with apprentice trainers
- mentoring and nurturing the apprentice training group
- co-ordinating the communication flow between regional delivery of the VAAT
- maintaining the information flow (web site, newsletter etc) and updating pertinent information; ongoing development of the Day 2 Modules
- collaborating with regions regarding a regional training plan

7. Summary of Workshop Evaluations

Overall the workshop evaluations were very positive. The content of the VAAT workshop appears to be well targeted. Participants reported strongly that they felt the content was appropriate for an introductory workshop. Those attending the pilot were highly motivated, knowledgeable and committed to being trainers. Their perceptions may differ from the general workforce. Since the VAAT has not been offered, as yet, to a regular workforce group subsequent evaluations should be checked to ensure the content fits the audience.

No major concerns or regional differences were noted in the evaluation responses.