

# Family Violence

IT'S *your* BUSINESS

COMMUNITY  
RESOURCE GUIDE



## Message from the Minister of Children's Services

Violence within the home tears families apart and leaves many victims, including innocent children. Many people believe domestic violence is a “family matter”, best dealt with behind closed doors. But, the issue of family violence is too serious for people to continue looking the other way. We need to take action.

According to a 2004 Statistics Canada survey, it is estimated that seven per cent of Canadians 15 years-of-age and older have experienced spousal violence in the previous five years. These numbers underline the importance of taking action to address the root causes of family violence, and to work together at all levels to build and maintain an Alberta free of family violence.

Children's Services has committed \$28.8 million in our 2005-06 budget – a \$9.5 million increase over last year – to areas such as women's shelter beds, outreach programs, services and supports for victims and safe visitation programming. However, putting an end to family violence requires a societal shift in the way people think about domestic abuse. That's why education and awareness activities are so important.

In Alberta, November is Family Violence Prevention Month (FVPM), and for 19 years it has included education and awareness activities. The 2005 provincial FVPM campaign – themed “It's your business” – is again co-managed by Children's Services and the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS), who have partnered for three years to raise awareness of this important issue. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the ACWS for its continued work in the area of family violence.

This resource guide was developed to serve as an information source for communities and organizations planning education and awareness activities throughout the year. It's one tool in a campaign including television and radio public service announcements, newspaper advertising, billboards and posters.

I encourage you to participate in Family Violence Prevention Month. Help spread the message that family violence is everyone's business and it won't be tolerated!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Forsyth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather Forsyth



## Message from the Honourary Chair of the 2004 Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying

Family violence and bullying affects us all in one way or another. It does more than cause physical injuries to the victims. It also robs individuals and communities of their full potential by diminishing energy, hearts and spirits.

The best way to stop family violence and bullying is to end the cycle of abuse that leads to this terrible loss. We can do that by ensuring that children and families dealing with violence and bullying receive the support and compassion they need to heal fully – body, mind and spirit. We also need to offer healing to the abusers so that this terrible cycle can be broken once and for all.

This resource guide is designed to help achieve that goal. It contains information to help service providers, communities and individual Albertans understand and support victims of violence. It also offers tools to help prevent violence from taking hold in our communities, both now and in the future.

I hope you'll mark Family Violence Prevention Month by taking part in or leading education and awareness activities in your community. Together we can build on the positive steps taken through initiatives like the Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying in May 2004, and through the wonderful collaborative work happening in communities around the province. I'd like to thank everyone who has shared their commitment and compassion in tackling this problem and I'd particularly like to thank the young Albertans who have been putting their wonderful energy and ideas toward finding a solution.

With the excellent work underway across Alberta, I believe we can end family violence and bullying. It's up to all of us to extend our hearts and hands to those who need our help now. We can make sure future generations of Albertans grow up free of abuse and ready to share their full potential with the world. It's time for us to take back our communities from the damages caused by violence and create a better future for us all.

In spirit,



Colleen Klein





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## Family Violence is Everybody's Business

The 2005 Family Violence Prevention Community Resource Guide has been created to provide family violence information and inspire you to become active in preventing violence in your community throughout the year.

Take this opportunity to think about the wide range of people you know. We each belong to many communities. Family, friends, work, volunteer, sport, neighbourhood and faith communities are just a few.

It is likely someone close to you has been affected by violence. Perhaps you have first hand experience or remember the story of a childhood friend. You may suspect your sister, cousin, aunt or grandmother faces this problem. Maybe you wonder about a child in daycare or overheard your teenager talking about dating problems. A work colleague or fellow volunteer may hint about wanting to leave an abusive partner. You might even become suspicious after learning an elderly neighbour is having sudden financial trouble.

Seven per cent of women in Alberta report having experienced family violence, with similar numbers for men. We may know a victim and we may know a perpetrator. Violence can happen to anyone, regardless of ethnic background, gender, social class or ability.

The existence of family violence in our community affects our safety, security, health and dignity. It affects our individual and collective ability to live free of fear.

Even if you are only interested in certain parts of this guide, please take the time to read every section for a more complete understanding about this important issue. Family violence is everybody's business and it's every community member's responsibility to seek change. Your personal commitment to learn more will help make it easier to prevent family violence.

## NOVEMBER IS FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION MONTH

Family Violence Prevention Month started in 1986 as a local initiative in the town of Hinton, Alberta. Concerned residents launched a family violence education and prevention campaign, hosting community presentations and brown bag lunch discussions, as well as distributing informative place mats.

Former social services minister, Connie Osterman, was impressed with the courage and determination of Hinton residents. This grass roots effort helped inspire the Alberta Legislature to support family violence prevention as an ongoing provincial initiative. The result was the birth of Family Violence Prevention Month.

Nineteen years later, hundreds of Alberta communities and thousands of individuals are actively involved in preventing family violence through education and service provision. They do it because they know *family violence is everyone's business*.



**Speak out and  
take action  
against family  
violence!**

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## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Queen's Printer

### Edmonton Bookstore

Main Floor, Park Plaza  
10611 - 98 Avenue,  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2P7  
Phone: (780) 427-4952  
Fax: (780) 452-0668

Office hours:  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Monday to Friday  
(except holidays).

Callers outside  
Edmonton may call  
toll free by dialing 310-  
0000 and asking for  
the Queen's Printer.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS AND LEGISLATION

*Alberta Justice, Alberta Solicitor General and Ministry of Public Security have provided these highlights.*

In 2002, Statistics Canada reported approximately one quarter of all violent crime victims were also family violence victims and 62 per cent of these individuals were abused by spouses. In 2001, Alberta police responded to more than 6,000 spousal abuse incidents, with charges laid 67 per cent of the time.

Public demand for more effective methods of dealing with family violence resulted in the *Protection Against Family Violence Act*, which came into effect June 1, 1999. The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* was also created to serve and protect families.

Copies of these acts are available at [www.qp.gov.ab.ca](http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca) or from the Queen's Printer.

#### ***Protection Against Family Violence Act***

The *Protection Against Family Violence Act* makes it possible to temporarily remove an abusive family member from home and its residents for a specified time period. Police or social workers can obtain an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) through a Justice of the Peace on a 24-hour basis. They may obtain a warrant of entry to assist family violence victims. Also under this legislation, a person may then directly apply for a longer term Queen's Bench protection order.

#### ***Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act***

The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* includes exposure to domestic violence in its definition of emotional injury. Exposure to domestic violence can place children in need of intervention. For this reason, police responding to situations with children present may include a Children's Services referral. It is important to note the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* emphasizes intervention that supports the abused and prevents removing children from abused family members' custody, keeping in mind that child safety is of paramount concern.

#### ***Criminal Code of Canada***

Legally termed as criminal harassment, stalking was defined as a crime in Canada in 1993. The primary motivation for stalking typically relates to a desire to control a former partner. It is an extension of domestic violence.

Victims of stalking may experience psychological effects including intense fear, intimidation, and a feeling of lost control over one's life. Stalking can be a precursor to violent acts, with non-violent stalking increasing to a level where it becomes life threatening.

The *Criminal Code of Canada* governs stalking under **Criminal Harassment**. For additional information visit <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-46> to access Department of Justice publications.



# Parents and Educators

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Family violence and child abuse can happen to any family. As a parent, teacher, or someone involved with education, you are likely in contact with children who have been exposed to family violence. Educators are often first to suspect a child is living with serious problems. Daily, ongoing contact with children makes it easier to notice out of the ordinary patterns and situations.

A child is defined as anyone less than 18 years of age. Any child may be vulnerable to family violence, with older children and youth facing additional risk circumstances. Dating, surfing the Internet and greater independence offer additional situations where problems can occur. Whether abuse is physical, emotional, sexual or in the form of neglect, it is important to remember the same laws apply to anyone under the age of 18 years.

This section of the guide will help parents and those who work with children and youth recognize types and signs of child abuse, the effects of exposure to violence, how to help children and how to initiate a community response. The perspectives of a number of professionals are also included. Be sure to explore the Additional Resources section of this guide for more information.

## What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse views are changing as knowledge increases about children's needs and the effects of social environments on growth and development. Alberta's *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and *Canada's Criminal Code* legally define behaviours and conditions that require intervention.

Some practices, once considered acceptable, are now generally believed abusive. There are four main kinds of abuse.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is the intentional use of force on any part of a child's body that results in serious injuries. It may be a single incident or series of incidents. The *Criminal Code* states that physical force cannot be used on children unless the force used is "reasonable" and has been used for "corrective purposes" by a parent or someone acting in the role of a parent.

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

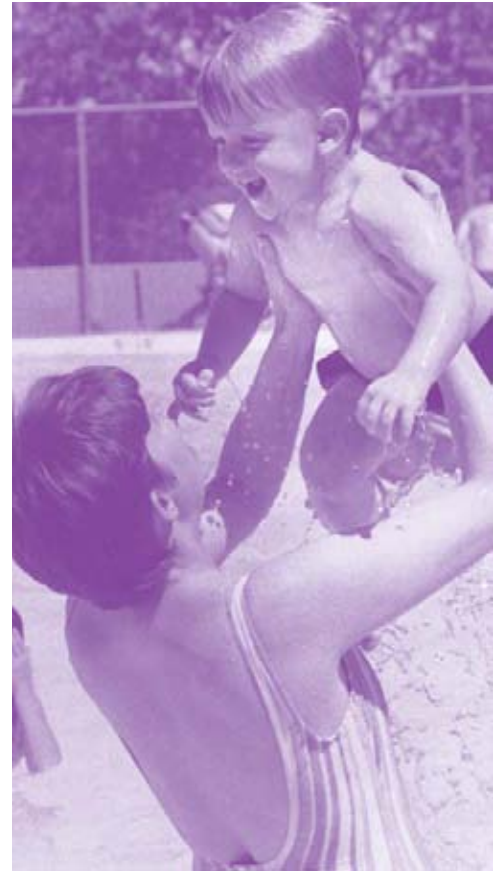
Exposure to violence or severe conflict can cause a child to be afraid much of the time. This emotional abuse may also take the form of verbal attacks, forced isolation, repeated humiliation, rejection and even chronic exposure to alcohol or drug abuse. Emotional abuse rarely happens only once and is usually part of daily interaction.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is the improper exposure of a child to sexual contact, activity or behaviour. It includes any sexual touching, intercourse, exploitation or exposure and can be perpetuated by anyone, including a parent, relative, friend or stranger.

### NEGLECT

Neglect is any lack of care endangering a child or causing serious harm to a child's development. Physical neglect includes failing to provide adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, health care and protection from harm. Emotional neglect is the failure to meet a child's emotional needs for affection and a sense of belonging.



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## FAMILY VIOLENCE



### **Highlights of the *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect – 2003: Major Findings (2005)***

- In 2003, exposure to domestic violence was the second most common form (28 per cent) of substantiated child maltreatment in Canada.
- Neglect (30 per cent), exposure to domestic violence (28 per cent), and physical abuse (24 per cent) were the three primary categories of substantiated maltreatment. Emotional maltreatment accounted for another 15 per cent of cases while sexual abuse cases represented only three per cent of all substantiated investigations.
- The rate of exposure to domestic violence increased 259 per cent, from 1.72 substantiated cases per 1,000 to 6.17.
- The rate of substantiated maltreatment in Canada, excluding of Quebec, has increased 125 per cent, from 9.64 substantiated cases per thousand children in 1998 to 21.71 in 2003. This increase in documented maltreatment may be explained by improved and expanded reporting and investigation procedures such as:
  1. changes in case substantiation practices;
  2. more systematic identification of victimized siblings, and;
  3. greater awareness of emotional maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence.
- While the number of cases of substantiated maltreatment has increased dramatically, it is important to note that many of these children come to the attention of child welfare authorities for preventative intervention before they have been severely harmed. Physical harm was noted in 10 per cent of cases of substantiated maltreatment. In three per cent of cases, physical harm was severe enough to require medical intervention. Emotional harm was noted in 20 per cent of substantiated cases.

*Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2003: Major Findings (2005)* by Nico Trocmé, Barbara Fallon, Bruce MacLaurin, Joanne Daciuk, Caroline Felstiner, Tara Black



## Facts about Exposure to Violence

- More children under the age of five live in a household where domestic violence occurs, than any other age category.  
*Baker, Linda L. Jaffe, Peter G. et al. Children Exposed to Domestic Violence: An Early Childhood Educator's Handbook to Increase Understanding and Improve Community Resources, 2002*
- Being in a home where violence is occurring can cause serious anxiety for children. The earlier they experience anxiety, the more likely it will last and affect their future behaviour, and the more likely they will act aggressively with other children.  
*Moss, Kathleen, Witnessing Violence-Aggression and Anxiety in Young Children, Supplement to Health Reports, Volume 14, Statistics Canada, 2003*
- If the violence at home continues, children can develop symptoms similar to post traumatic stress disorder. Key signs of this disorder include intense fear or helplessness, outbursts of anger, and difficulty sleeping.  
*Hotton, Tina, Childhood aggression and exposure to violence in the home, Department of Justice Canada, Statistics Canada, 2003*
- Exposure to domestic violence during the early years affects a child's brain development, as well as every developmental process the child experiences. This occurs even when the child is not consciously aware of violence in the home.  
*Bender, Eve, PTSD, Other Disorders Evident in Kids Who Witness Domestic Violence, Volume 39, Number 11. Psychiatric News, June 4, 2004*
- Eighty-five per cent of a child's core brain structures are developed by the time a child is three years old. This development will lay the foundation for every level of development in the child's life, including the ability to form emotionally healthy relationships.  
*Perry, Bruce D., ChildTrauma Academy, www.childtrauma.org How Experiences in Early Childhood Create a Healthy Society*
- Exposure to family violence is linked to compromised brain development and lower I.Q. measures.  
*Ibid; McCain, M., Mustard, J. Fraser, Early Years Study, Final Report, Publications Ontario, 1999*

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## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Signs a Child May be Exposed to Domestic Violence

The following list of possible child abuse indicators is not inclusive and may also suggest other problems. Every family violence situation is unique. Signs alone do not prove abuse, but do indicate a need for attention. If in doubt, contact your local Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) to discuss the situation. See page 112 for a list of CFSA offices in Alberta.

#### SUSPECT FAMILY VIOLENCE IF YOU OBSERVE:

- unexplained bruises or injuries, especially in places not normally injured during regular play or movement
- burns which leave a pattern outlining the object used to make the burn (such as a cigarette, iron, or electric stove burner); burns on the hands, feet or buttocks caused by scalding water; or rope burns caused by being tied
- a child who is continually hungry, unsuitably dressed for the weather or always dirty
- a young child often left alone
- a child who is usually aggressive, angry and hostile to other people
- a child who demonstrates withdrawn behaviour, or refuses to participate or dress appropriately for physical activities
- a child who shows knowledge of sexual matters beyond his/her age of development or who exhibits sexualized behaviour around adults or other children
- a child who hints or talks outright about sexual abuse
- a child or adolescent who repeatedly runs away from home

#### EFFECTS OF PRESCHOOL EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE:

- an infant or toddlers' ability to play and explore may be limited by fear and anxiety
- children may learn and copy aggression based on what is seen at home
- distress may result from exposure to loud noises or visual images associated with violence
- the parent-child bond can be negatively affected, as parents may not be able to consistently respond to a child's needs
- preschoolers may express anger and other emotions in unhealthy ways, as well as be confused by mixed messages received at home
- home instability may cause preschoolers to become more dependent upon caregivers
- preschoolers may regress to behaviours more typical of younger toddlers

Baker, Linda L., Jaffe, Peter G., Moore, Kathy J., *Understanding the Effects of Domestic Violence – A Handbook for Early Childhood Educators, Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2001*

#### **Training for Caregivers Working with Children Exposed to Family Violence**

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) sponsors training for professionals working with children exposed to family violence. For more information visit [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca) or contact the ACWS at (780) 456-7000 or toll free at 1-866-331-3933.

## The Destructive Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

By Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., Senior Fellow, The Child Trauma Academy, Houston, TX;  
Consultant, Ministry of Alberta Children's Services

The tragic impact of domestic violence reaches far beyond the direct emotional and physical destructive effects on the adult victim. In many family violence situations there are children who witness the fighting and the assaults. Indeed, there are more children victims of family violence than adult victims. A typical women's shelter has at least twice as many children as adults. In studies of children exposed to domestic violence, the long term emotional, behavioural and social problems are more pronounced and pervasive than in children who are direct victims of physical abuse. How does this happen?

### WHAT IS CHANGING IN THE BRAIN OF A CHILD EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

When a child is exposed to any threat his brain will activate a set of adaptive responses which help him survive. There is a continuum of adaptive responses to threat and different children have different adaptive styles. Some use a *hyperarousal* response (e.g., the fight or flight) and some a *dissociative* response (essentially "tuning out" the impeding threat). In most traumatic events, a combination of these two is used.

When this threat is repetitive or chronic, as in domestic violence, these systems in the brain undergo permanent changes. The changes result in emotional, behavioural, social, cognitive and physical symptoms. These symptoms vary depending upon a many factors but commonly include relationship problems, impulsivity, inattention, anxiety and depressed mood. The symptoms will reflect alterations in the parts of the brain involved in the original adaptive response to the threat; however, due to "use-dependent" changes in neural networks, chronic activation of a stress response will result in over-reactive, sensitized stress reactivity.

Whether a child uses the hyperarousal or dissociative response, trauma-related alterations in these responses from, say, growing up in a violent, chaotic home, will result in development that is profoundly altered.

A child adopting a hyperarousal response may display defiance, easily misinterpreted as wilful opposition. These children may be resistant or even aggressive. They are locked in a persistent "fight or flight" state. They often display hypervigilance, anxiety, panic, or increased heart rate. A hyperarousal response is more common in older children, males, and in circumstances where trauma involves witnessing or playing an active role in the event.

The dissociative response involves avoidance or psychological flight, withdrawing from the outside world and focussing on the inner. The intensity of dissociation varies with the intensity of the threat. Children with alterations in the dissociative response may be detached, numb and have a low heart rate. In extreme cases they may withdraw into a fantasy world. A dissociative child is often compliant (even robotic), displays rhythmic self-soothing such as rocking, or may faint if feeling extreme distress. Dissociation is more common in young children, females, and during traumatic events characterized by pain or inability to escape.

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## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### A CHRONIC FEAR STATE CHANGES THE WAY CHILDREN THINK, ACT AND FEEL

A child with a brain adapted for an environment of chaos, unpredictability, threat and distress is ill-suited to the modern classroom or playground. It is an unfortunate reality that the very adaptive responses that help the child survive in a domestic violence environment places the child at a disadvantage when outside that context. The result is that even when there is no external threat or demand, they are physiologically in a state of alarm, of “fight or flight.” When a stressor arises, perhaps an argument with a peer or a demanding school task, they can escalate to a state of fear very quickly. When faced with a typical exchange with an adult, perhaps a teacher in a slightly frustrated mood, the child may over-read the non-verbal cues such as eye contact or touch.

Vulnerable children have much less capacity to tolerate the normal demands and stresses of school, home and social life compared to their peers. When faced with a challenge, vulnerable children react with fear or terror. Typical children may become vigilant or slightly anxious, while resilient children are likely to stay calm.

Children in a state of fear retrieve information from the world differently than children who feel calm. The traumatized child, therefore, living in an aroused state, is ill-prepared to learn from social, emotional and other life experiences. The more threatened the child feels, the less thoughtful and the more reactive her responses become. In a state of alarm, fear, or terror, a child is less likely to use abstract thought. Instead, they are governed by emotional and reactive thinking styles, and may not appreciate any consequences of their actions.

### HELPING CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

How do we help? First, it is important to understand that the brain altered in destructive ways by trauma and neglect can be altered in reparative, healing ways. A key to this therapeutic healing process is to provide a safe, predictable and loving environment for these children.

Unfortunately, the child continuing to live under threat will not get better despite all of our conventional therapeutic efforts. Those of us who live and work with these children can start providing healing environments. We can become better role models in all our interactions with children we can be attentive, respectful, honest and caring. Traumatized children need to learn that not all adults are inattentive, abusive, unpredictable or violent. And, of course, the wisest strategy is to prevent domestic violence. Safe women create safe environments for their children.



## Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sexual abuse can take the form of exploitation including distributing, selling or making child pornography, luring a young person via the Internet for sexual purposes, or the prostitution of someone under the age of 18. Sexual exploitation of children and youth crosses all social and economic boundaries. All children are at risk.

### FACTS

- eighty-five per cent of children were sexually abused before becoming involved in prostitution
- the average age of becoming involved in prostitution is 15 years for females and 17 years for males
- children make up 10-12 per cent of those involved in street prostitution

The *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act* recognizes children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse. This legislation has resulted in programs and services to help children end their involvement in prostitution. Please visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/pcse](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/pcse) for more information.

## Responding to Different Types of Abuse

The law requires you to take prompt action if you suspect a child is a victim of family violence, abuse or neglect, or if you feel a child may need intervention. Who you contact depends on whether the situation is caused by a parent or guardian, or someone else.

**If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected by a parent or guardian, you must report your suspicions immediately.**

**Call the police, your local Child and Family Services Authority\* or the 24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-387-KIDS (5437)**

**If you suspect someone other than a parent or guardian is abusing a child, you must report your suspicions immediately to the police.**

**Look in the red emergency pages of your local telephone directory to find the telephone number of police in your area.**

### IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD MAY BE ABUSED OR NEGLECTED BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN:

- The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* guides procedures for dealing with abuse resulting from a child's parent or guardian. Suspicions should be immediately reported to a Children's Services caseworker or police officer, regardless of how information was obtained and regardless of any advice or request not to report.
- Anyone who receives a disclosure of abuse from a child should also contact a Children's Services caseworker or police officer and refrain from questioning the child. Trained to investigate and assess the need for intervention, caseworkers have the authority to intervene. Do not notify the child's parent or guardian.
- The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* states a child is in need of intervention when there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe the child's survival, security or development is endangered by parent or guardian action or inaction.

### IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE OR NEGLECT IS CAUSED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN:

- The *Criminal Code of Canada* guides procedures for dealing with certain offences committed against children, including physical assault, sexual assault, other sexual offences, abandonment and failure to provide the necessities of life. Criminal offences, penalties and procedures for dealing with the accused are defined in the *Criminal Code of Canada*.
- Police conduct investigations and decide whether charges should be laid. Charges can also be made under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and the *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act*. Children under the age of 12 cannot be charged with a criminal offence.

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\* A listing of Alberta's Child and Family Services Authorities can be found on page 112 of this document.

## WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD TELLS YOU ABOUT ABUSE

If a child discloses abuse to you, do not probe for details. Listen to the information provided and record it as soon as possible in the child's own words. Be supportive and let the child know it is right to tell someone.

Here are some suggestions for talking to a child about abuse. It is important to be a good listener and avoid probing the child for information.

### Do:

- ✓ find a private, quiet place to listen
- ✓ listen in a calm, non-judgemental manner
- ✓ reassure the child it is right to tell
- ✓ assure the child what happened was not his or her fault
- ✓ acknowledge the child's feelings
- ✓ say "I'll try to help"
- ✓ write down what you heard and saw:
- ✓ quote the child's words as much as possible
- ✓ use words that describe things you can see or hear
- ✓ keep your notes and information confidential and secure

### Do not:

- ✗ interrupt the child's story
- ✗ promise to keep disclosure confidential
- ✗ ask leading questions
- ✗ show horror or anger
- ✗ conduct your own investigation
- ✗ provide opinions or judgements
- ✗ promise the child what will happen
- ✗ promise things will get better

## REPORTING

Every child exposed to family violence is vulnerable. There is no safe age and no safe level of violence. Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect or anything that endangers the development, security or survival of a child must be reported.

Although helping can feel awkward when you are uncertain or lack proof of a situation, inaction is not a solution. If you suspect a child is experiencing family violence, it is your duty to contact authorities to explore the situation.

Trust your instincts. Reporting child abuse is always treated confidentially and reports can be made anonymously.



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## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Disclosure Checklist

**Provide disclosure details and as much of the following information as possible:**

- your name
- your telephone number
- your relationship to the child and how long you've known the child
- whether the child or family knows you are reporting
- the child's name
- the child's sex
- the child's birth date
- the child's address
- the child's telephone number
- the child care program or family day home name and address
- school name and address
- whether the child is Aboriginal and, if so, whether the child belongs to an Aboriginal community
- the name, address, telephone number of the alleged perpetrator, if known, and other information which may assist in locating or identifying that person
- the name, address and telephone number of the parent or guardian's home
- the name, address and telephone number of the parent or guardian's workplace

**If disclosed:**

- when and where the abuse took place
- how long the abuse has been going on
- whether the situation has worsened
- current location of the abuser or parent or guardian
- your own observations
- other indicators of abuse
- full details of the incident or situation which precipitated the report, being as specific as possible and making notes on details, events or behaviour that caused concern
- whether you are aware of any efforts made to resolve the situation and the results
- the child's condition and any concerns about the child's immediate safety
- whether you know of other professionals or agencies involved with the family or anyone else who might provide relevant information
- whether you know anything about the situation or alleged perpetrator that might pose a threat to an investigator
- whether you can provide a place in your facility to interview the child
- whether there is a language barrier or disability that would require assistance



## Frequently Asked Questions for Educators Reporting Abuse

### ***Whose responsibility is it to report suspected child abuse?***

Anyone who becomes aware of a child abuse situation is required to make a report to the police or a Children's Services caseworker. It is mandatory for ALL school personnel to report every situation where it is believed a child has been, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. The obligation to report is not discharged until the individual has reported directly to a Children's Services caseworker.

No person needs permission from a principal or administrator before reporting, nor may anyone direct someone not to report.

### ***Are schools required to allow the investigating team on the school premises to interview a child?***

School personnel are expected to co-operate when an investigating team asks to interview a child on school premises. If appropriate, the team will give the principal advance notice of the need to visit the school and conduct the interview on the premises. The interview must be conducted in a way that minimizes school activity disruption.

### ***Should the administrator or other school personnel sit in on the interview?***

Interviews should be conducted in private unless a child specifically asks someone to stay for support. A principal may ask if the child would like someone present, but should respect the child's answer. No school policy can require a school member to be present during the interview.

### ***Whose responsibility is it to notify the child's parents of the interview? When should this occur?***

The investigating team is responsible for deciding when to notify parents or guardians. If a child is held after school hours, the investigating team informs the parents or guardians of the child's whereabouts and takes the child home if necessary. The school should NOT notify the parents or guardians prior to the interview or request interview permission.

### ***Do Children's Services caseworkers have ongoing access to a child at school?***

The Children's Services caseworker considers the needs of both the student and the school when considering access issues. Generally, Children's Services caseworkers are not to use school premises for ongoing case interviews. If a worker needs access to a student during school hours, appropriate arrangements will be made after discussing the situation with the principal.



### **If you have additional questions, please contact:**

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Education Manager

Alberta Children and Youth Initiative (ACYI)

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## Teens and Dating Violence

Patterns of abuse may begin when young people start dating and developing intimate relationships. It can happen at any age and occurs in gay and lesbian, as well as heterosexual associations.

Teen dating violence is often hidden. Typically wanting independence from parents, teens may be reluctant to discuss their experiences. Romantic views of love may cause a teen to accept abuse for the sake of maintaining a relationship.

What about the perpetrators? Inexperienced with dating, some youth may succumb to peer pressure that encourages violence.

Studies show at least one in ten teens will experience an abusive relationship. In 95 per cent of reported abusive heterosexual relationships, the male abuses the female.

### DATING VIOLENCE CAN TAKE SEVERAL FORMS:

#### Sexual molestation and assault includes:

- rape
- unwanted sexual touching
- sexual harassment
- sexual exploitation
- forcing unsafe, degrading, or offensive sexual activity
- denying or ridiculing a person's sexuality
- controlling reproductive decisions

#### Psychological control includes:

- excessive jealousy
- insisting a partner cut off communication and contact with friends or family
- dictating behaviour, such as clothing choices
- grandiose promises of marriage or security, often under the guise of love
- destruction of personal property
- threats
- degrading comments or put-downs

#### Physical abuse and torture:

- assault may include beating, burning, slapping, strangulation, kicking, pushing, biting and use of any weapon
- physical neglect, such as denial of food or medication
- inappropriate personal or medical care
- rough-handling
- confinement

#### Stalking includes:

- persistent and unwanted attention
- spying and following
- excessive telephone, mobile phone, Internet, or text-message communication

#### Bullying includes:

- physical torture
- encouraging exclusion
- spreading rumours (often about sexual activity)
- inappropriate telephone, mobile phone, Internet or text-message communication

## RISK FACTORS

Girls and young women are highly vulnerable to sexual assault. Those in low-income situations are often vulnerable to family violence. They may become trapped in abusive relationships because limited financial resources can make them feel they have fewer options.

Almost all young women in the sex trade have fled abusive homes. These individuals are at enormous risk of sexual and physical assault, ongoing abuse and murder.

Those from ethno cultural or other marginalized communities are at a somewhat higher risk of violence. Aboriginal girls and young women often experience violence at the hands of parents who were subjected to rape, physical abuse and cultural genocide at a residential school.

- In 1997, people under 18 years made up 24 per cent of the Canadian population but represented 60 per cent of all sexual assault victims and 19 per cent of physical assault victims.
- Women under 25 are at the greatest risk of being killed by their male partners.
- Young women between the ages of 15 and 19 are twice as likely as older women to be killed in a violent marriage (*Wilson and Daly 1994, 10*).
- Sexual abuse of girls and young women with disabilities is four times the national average (*Razack 1994*). They may also be physically, sexually or financially abused by people aiding in their care.

## FACTS ABOUT DATING AND SEXUAL ABUSE

- Girls are two to three times more likely to experience sexual abuse than boys (*Johnston and Saenz 1997*).
- Young women are at greater risk of sexual assault, physical assault and murder than older women. Eighty-four per cent of the victims of child sexual assault are girls and 97 per cent of the perpetrators are male. Of sexual offences against kids under 12, the ages at which boys are most likely to be sexually assaulted, girl victims outnumber boys by two to one. (*Department of Justice 1992*).
- Forty-three per cent of women in one study reported at least one incident of unwanted sexual touching, forced or attempted forced sexual intercourse, or being forced to perform other acts of a sexual nature before the age of 16 (*Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women*).

Data from the Women's Safety Project, a survey of 420 randomly selected women living in Toronto. Reported in Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, *Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence – Achieving Equality* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1993).

The following information has been provided courtesy of The Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ACADV).

### Pay attention to clues that may indicate a teenager is experiencing dating violence:

- signs of physical injury
- drug or alcohol use
- truancy
- falling or failing grades
- dropping out of school
- mood or personality changes
- emotional outbursts
- indecision
- isolation
- pregnancy

Women of all ages can take measures to help prevent becoming abuse victims. Recognizing trouble signs is an important first step. It is equally vital for women to value themselves and take action to avoid partners who try to maintain power or control over their time, body or actions.

*If you or someone you know is experiencing a family violence emergency, call 911 or contact your local police.*

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE



The Dating Bill of Rights outlines the respectful treatment every woman should achieve in a healthy dating or intimate relationship.

### DATING BILL OF RIGHTS

#### **I have a right to:**

- Ask for a date
- Refuse a date
- Suggest activities
- Refuse any activity, even if my date is excited about it
- Have my own feelings and be able to express them
- Say, "I think my friend is wrong and his actions are inappropriate"
- Tell someone not to interrupt me
- Have my limits and values respected
- Tell my partner when I need affection
- Refuse affection
- Be heard
- Refuse to lend money
- Refuse sex any time, for any reason
- Have friends and space aside from my partner

#### **I have the responsibility to:**

- Determine my limits and values
- Respect the limits of others
- Communicate clearly and honestly
- Not violate the limits of others
- Ask for help when I need it
- Be considerate
- Check my actions and decisions to determine whether they are good or bad for me
- Set high goals for myself

### DATING SAFETY

- consider double-dating the first few times you go out with a new person
- before leaving on a date, know the exact plans for the evening and make sure a parent or friend knows these plans and what time to expect you home
- let your date know you are expected to call or tell that person when you are home
- be aware of your decreased ability to react under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- if leaving a party with someone you do not know well, make sure you tell a responsible person your plans and whom you are with
- ask a friend to call and make sure you arrived home safely
- assert yourself when necessary
- be firm and straightforward in your relationships
- trust your instincts
- if a situation makes you uncomfortable, try to be calm and think of a way to remove yourself from the situation

### SAFETY PLANNING FOR TEENS

Plan in advance different ways to be safe if you are in a dangerous or potentially dangerous relationship. Use this list to help you design your own safety plan.

- list adults you can tell about the violence, including people at school, such as teachers, principal, counsellors and security staff
- list friends you can ask to help you remain safe
- use the buddy system for going to school, classes and after school activities
- list who you could call for a ride home if you become stranded
- list places you could quickly go to escape an abusive person

- consider changing your school locker or lock
- consider changing your route to and from school
- get rid of or change the number to any beepers, pagers or cell phones you use
- keep spare change, calling cards, the local shelter number, the numbers of people who could help and restraining orders with you at all times
- keep a journal describing abusive incidents

## HELP DATERS HELP THEMSELVES!

Encourage people who date to examine their relationships. Daters should consider whether they are:

- afraid of the partner
- made to feel stupid, ugly, useless or worthless
- feeling cut off from friends and family
- feeling forced into sexual activity
- threatened with physical abuse
- manipulated emotionally, such as “if you love me, then you will do as I want”
- experiencing physical abuse such as shoving, grabbing, hitting, pinching, or kicking
- witnessing wild mood swings, perhaps alternating between cruel and kind, almost as if there are two personalities
- receiving frequent promises to change
- with someone who denies or belittles abuse that has occurred

## TAKE ACTION!

- Encourage teens facing abuse to talk to a trusted friend, family member, neighbour, health professional, faith leader, teacher or school counsellor. They may also call the local police, RCMP or Tribal Police.
- Raise community awareness by talking and speaking out against violence and abuse.
- Help your school develop a student led campaign against violence and bullying. Honour students who participate.
- Arrange a school presentation addressing dating violence.
- Become aware of school and community resources to help those in abusive situations.
- Give copies of a dating safely checklist to all students on registration day. Involve your school's student union to post the Dating Bill of Rights in school hallways and bathrooms.
- Explore your perspective on relationships by taking the appropriate quiz below.

### Relationship Quiz

Does your partner try and control everything you do?

Are you discouraged or stopped from seeing family and friends?

Are you put down, insulted and called names?

Is your partner extremely jealous and possessive?

***You are being abused if you answered yes to any of the above. This is not love.***

Do you ever treat your partner as a possession?

Do you blame or insult your partner for everything that goes wrong?

Do you prevent your partner from seeing other people without you?

***If you answered yes to any of the above, you could be an abuser. Take responsibility. This is not love.***

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Violence in the Media:

#### How Do You Rate as a Parent Media Manager?

By Sharon McCann and Gerry Lawson, Alberta Film Classification Services

*“A steady violence diet creates and nourishes a culture of disrespect.”*

– Psychologist, David Walsh

How often have you heard the expressions “It’s just a movie,” or “It’s only a video game?” Has your child ever begged for permission to see a film with the excuse that “All the kids at school have seen it,” or “I’ll see it at my friend’s house anyway?”

It’s everyone’s business when children and youth are allowed free access to violent, sexually explicit and potentially disturbing media entertainment products that are labelled clearly as inappropriate for young viewers. It seems many adults today don’t take their roles as media monitors as seriously as did the parents of yesteryear. The reasons given include “not enough time,” “other issues are more important,” or “my child is smart and can tell the difference between fantasy and reality.”

One frequently cited explanation for the more permissive standards of family media consumption is the technological advances that make it all but impossible for parents to prevent their media-savvy children from buying, renting, borrowing, ordering or downloading almost anything they want. With a few simple mouse clicks, even very young children can easily access violent games and sexually explicit images. Too much media exposure and exposure to the wrong kind of media entertainment can negatively affect a child’s physical and mental development, as well as influence and shape a child’s values, attitudes and beliefs.

Government classification boards such as Alberta Film Classification Services (AFCS) and self-regulatory agencies such as the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) have various responsibilities for classifying movies, DVDs and video games before they are made available to the public. Checking the ratings and enforcing the recommended age restrictions in the home is *still* a parental responsibility. A growing issue is that today’s parents are often not around to check labels, monitor Internet usage or listen to the lyrics of the latest youth-targeted CD. In many homes, the entertainment system is in the child’s bedroom where parents and caregivers are not aware of the programs, games or Web sites children access.

Another problem with living in our media-saturated culture is a lack of consensus on media content that is inappropriate for children. Some parents argue that nudity or swearing in the media is more harmful than viewing violent movies or playing violent video games. Other parents are concerned that all forms of media entertainment take away time that children should be spending on homework, healthy outdoor activities, social interaction and reading books. While there is ample scientific research to confirm the dangers of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, it is far more difficult to obtain proof of the harmful effects of media images and messages.

Recently released research reports such as the 2005 Kaiser Foundation Report and similar reports by the American Medical Association and the Canadian Paediatric Society are beginning to provide convincing evidence that the adverse health and



social consequences from excessive media use may include increased violent behaviour, excessive consumer focus, obesity, insomnia, impaired school performance, increased tobacco and alcohol use, as well as a decrease in attention span, family communication, and social skills. There is also startling new research to support the claim that children under the age of three should *not* be exposed to *any* amount of television. You can view the 2005 Kaiser Foundation Report at [www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia030905pkg.cfm](http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia030905pkg.cfm) and visit [www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca) to learn more about the Canadian Paediatric Society.

A growing concern that is often ignored in the literature is the negative effect on children, youth and families of a constant barrage of media entertainment that promotes anti-social values, glorifies violence, glamorizes weapons, normalizes foul language and provides models for disrespect and cynicism. Even G- and PG-rated programs contain put-downs, racial slurs, sexist comments, bullying incidents and verbal abuse. Mean and hateful communication is a standard ingredient in many television shows, films and video games. Many popular TV shows, movies, and video games focus on the lives of real convicted criminals, psychopaths and sexually dysfunctional adults, and even portray them as heroes or sympathetic characters. While government and community agencies strive to address serious issues associated with family violence and bullying, parents, at the same time, are allowing their children to escape to their bedrooms to be entertained daily with stories, games and images that promote the very negative values and behaviours we want to discourage.

The expression “It takes a village to raise a child” acquires new meaning when one considers that everyone in the community has a role to play in helping to prevent children’s early exposure to violent and anti-social media messages. From media producers who make and market media, to regulatory agencies who classify and label them, to exhibitors and retailers who sell media products, to educators who teach media awareness in the classroom, to parents who set family viewing guidelines – everyone has an essential responsibility to help children and youth become informed and responsible media consumers. If children are to successfully navigate our media saturated world, they need to learn to look closely and think critically about the media they confront every day. Parents need to monitor family viewing to ensure their children are receiving the right messages about positive values, morals and acceptable standards of behaviour.

Ray Bradbury’s short story, “The Veldt,” contains an important message for parents. It is a cautionary tale about the media that has the teaching power of a fable or a parable.

The story concerns a technologically-advanced family whose house is a high-tech wonder of the future. The children have the ultimate interactive “nursery.” Not only do they have the equivalent of a home theatre, surround sound system that permits them to experience the sights and sounds of an environment, but their media environment includes the textures, the fragrances and even the dangers inherent within a chosen location. It is the ultimate in home entertainment, a combined movie, television show and video game in a reality setting. This nursery is the children’s space, and they can call up any place and experience any adventure at will. In Bradbury’s story, parents supply this exciting technology but they do not use it. It is their children who learn to manipulate and modify the computerized wizardry, thereby outdistancing their parents in controlling the operation of their entertainment system. The children control the medium to the point where they can exert their collective wills and force their parents to comply with their wishes.

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ironically, the parents in this story had been warned about what would happen and even advised by a family psychologist to turn off the media that inundated their home. He also advised them to go outside with the kids, to interact with them in meaningful ways and to share activities that do not involve media technology. Alas, the parents did not heed the advice; consequently, they lost control over their offspring. The chilling and unsettling ending has the children exacting revenge on their parents who had become obstacles to their will.

Today's kids are as media-savvy as Bradbury's characters. But do today's parents really understand the effect the media is having on the minds of their children in their formative years? Do they know that when children are inundated with constant exposure to celebrity, they think of themselves as celebrities and develop a "me" focus that makes it difficult to empathize with others? Do parents know that when children see violence on the screen, they see violence as the means to problem solving? Do parents consider repeated media messages showing that force triumphs may explain the escalation of bullying? Have parents noticed that when children hear coarse language from their media heroes, the message they receive is that such language is normal and therefore OK to emulate?

Easy access to media is a fact of life. The only barrier to a child's misuse of media is the parent. Parents can play a powerful role in helping children and youth adopt healthy media consumption habits, starting with establishing family rules about media use. The following parent media management tips are useful starting points:

- Record each family member's media use over an entire week and hold a family discussion about whether changes are needed.
- Set daily time limits on television viewing, video gaming and Internet usage.
- Remove televisions, computers and game consoles from children's bedrooms.
- Become familiar with the rating systems for all media products your family consumes.
- Check out the website [www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca) to learn more about media education strategies.
- Bookmark the website [www.albertafilmratings.ca](http://www.albertafilmratings.ca) and regularly check a movie's classification, advisory and classification report before allowing your child to attend or rent the film.
- Be a responsible media consumer and become a role model for your children.
- Balance media use with other activities such as family outings, hobbies, sports and creative play.
- Watch media with children and talk to them about their responses to violent or disturbing media entertainment. Ensure they know your values and ideals.
- Teach children how to voice their concerns about offensive media content to the producers and distributors of the product.
- Encourage your child's school to include media literacy initiatives as part of the school curriculum.
- Make it your business to find out what your children are watching!

## What You Can Do in Your Community

### AT HOME:

- offer a new toy, video or DVD in exchange for each violent toy, video or DVD turned in by a child volunteer with organizations that serve vulnerable, at-risk children
- collect teddy bears, quilts and other items to donate to a shelter for comforting children and youth
- discuss belittling, bullying and violence seen when watching television and movies with your child
- tell your child that violence is never acceptable
- encourage your family to participate in fun activities together

### AT WORK:

- develop family violence orientation and training for all staff and volunteers in your organization
- engage staff and volunteers in creating workplace dialogue and solutions on the impacts of family violence
- post child abuse indicators and procedures for reporting family violence in your organization's staff room
- keep family violence information readily available for staff, families and volunteers by supplying the fact sheets and brochures obtainable through the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Division of Children's Services at (780) 422-5916, toll free at 310-0000, or online at [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB)

### AT SCHOOLS:

- encourage schools to help children learn non-violent ways of dealing with conflict
- Explore the Canadian Red Cross RespectEd Violence and Abuse Prevention Program at [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca) and ask your local office to provide presentations at your school about dating violence, child abuse prevention, anti-bullying and reducing violence in sports
- encourage school administration to create professional development opportunities for school educators about dating violence and reporting child abuse
- ask school counsellors to place dating violence posters in the school and provide information sheets for students
- ask the school principal to insert a fact sheet about dating violence in the school newsletter for parents and guardians
- request your school develop a student led "anti violence and anti bullying campaign"
- honour students who work to reduce violence and bullying

### IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

- encourage daycare centres and schools to help children learn non-violent ways of dealing with conflict.
- explore and help publicize community activities that prevent family violence and support victims of family violence
- find out what support your community club, team, or organization can give those who are victims or perpetrators of family violence
- share this guide and suggest the following activities to help teach children about safety



### ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

The following activities can be used to help teach children to explore non-violent alternatives to fighting. You can use the activities as described or adapt them for your own use.

*Hands Are Not for Hitting* and *Words Are Not for Hurting* were championed by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, a voluntary organization that supports increasing awareness about family violence.

#### Hands Are Not for Hitting

##### Objectives

- for children to understand it is never okay to use their hands for hitting
- to help children think about positive caring uses for their hands
- to guide children to use alternatives to violence when problem solving

##### Materials

- Hands Are Not for Hitting banner header (downloadable from [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca) under Family Violence Prevention Month activities)
- mural paper six to seven feet long to match banner header
- paint for stamping or coloured markers for tracing hands

##### Involve Children

Children can:

- trace and colour their hands on the banner
- use paint to stamp their hands on the banner
- add their name to their handprint
- add a word or phrase describing positive hand activities
- repeat the words "hands are not for hitting" as they complete their hand print

##### Get the Message Out

1. hang the banner in a prominent location
2. invite the media to attend a session and spread the message
3. make and frame small banners to sell as fund-raisers

##### Discussion Ideas

Use the banner as a visual aide for discussion about why hitting and hurting others in any way is unacceptable.

Ask children to:

- explain why they think using their hands to hit or harm is never okay
- describe positive, caring and healthy ways to use their hands
- discuss non-violent ways of communicating
- describe activities they enjoy doing with their hands
- describe positive activities adults do with their hands (such as doctors, mechanics, musicians and others)

## SPOKEN WORD POETRY ACTIVITY

Spoken word poetry is a fun, creative way to reinforce positive messages such as *Hands Are Not for Hitting*. The following article describes one way poetry has been used to help prevent family violence. Lead children in reading or memorizing the poetry below to create your own performance, or have children write their own poems.

### **Hands Are Not for Hitting**

*By: Jessica Abells, Leah Doz, Aly Koskela, Kenton Mail, and Norah Sadava*

In concert with the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Division of Children's Services, 24 students from the Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts "Acting 35" class created this Hands Are Not for Hitting spoken word poetry piece, as well as a series of family violence and bullying scenarios, for the 2004 Diverse Voices Conference in Edmonton. Under the direction of instructor Greg Dowler-Coltman, the students explored, created and rehearsed scenes on issues of power and control for a period of seven weeks. The journey through this creative process galvanized the student actors as a socially responsive ensemble of young artists. How inspiring is that?

In addition to presenting Hands Are Not for Hitting at the Diverse Voices Conference in 2004, Jessica, Leah, Aly, Kenton and Norah performed the spoken word piece at the 2004 Family Violence Prevention Month Launch, and a 'Roots of Change' Teacher Training event in Edmonton. Shaw Cable showcased the poem in a story they aired on Family Violence and Youth, in the spring of 2005.

*(Spoken in a rhythmic style suggestive of a Dr. Seuss poem)*

Hands are not for hitting  
But they are for picking roses,  
And for scratching itchy itches  
And for blowing runny noses.

Hands are not for hitting  
But they are for making dunks with,  
They're for taking out the garbage,  
And climbing big bed bunks with.

Hands are not for hitting  
But they can help you dig to China,  
And build super tall sand mansions.  
There are no two things finna'.

Hands are great for climbing trees  
And also good for waving.  
Hands are good for – Oh me please!  
And for sharing something you've been saving.

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

You can wear a ring  
Or point to Mars, or even play a tune  
You can touch your toes and reach for the stars  
Or just wave – See ya soon!  
You raise your hand when you must speak  
And use it when you search and seek.  
Hands are for tearing well wrapped gifts  
And for giving friends a needed lift.

Hands are there to pet your dog,  
And feel your way through thick, thick fog.  
Hands are for tying lime green shoes  
And for giving hugs when you got the blues.  
... I got the blues.

Hands are for sipping like the Queen  
And for scrubbing the dishes til' squeaky clean.  
Hands are for turning your favourite book's page  
And for counting your years of age.

Hands are for holding when crossing the street  
And for shaking the hands of the people you meet.  
Hands are for mowing  
And blowing  
And towing!

Hands are for wishing  
And squishing  
And dishing

Hands are for –  
Hands are drumming  
And strumming  
And more!

HANDS ARE FOR  
HANDS ARE FOR  
HANDS ARE FOR  
HANDS ARE FOR  
HANDS ARE FOR  
HANDS ARE FOR

Hands are not for hitting.  
They're for SO much more.



## Words Are Not for Hurting

### Objectives

- for children to understand it is never okay to use words that may be hurtful to others
- to guide children to think about the positive, caring words they can use to express themselves and solve problems
- to educate children on the connection between hurtful words and their affect on another persons feelings

### Materials

- Words are Not for Hurting banner header (downloadable from [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca) under Family Violence Prevention Month activities)
- mural paper six to seven feet long to match banner header
- coloured markers to write positive words or phrases
- clippings of positive words or phrases (glue)

### Involve Children

- children can write positive words or phrases directly on the banner or suggest words for an adult to write
- children can use cut out words from newspapers or magazines and glue or tape them onto the banner
- children can add comments on how each positive word or phrase makes them feel

### Discussion

- ask children to explain why they think using hurtful words is not okay
- ask children to describe how hurtful words make others feel
- ask children how hurtful words make them feel
- ask children how positive words make them feel

### Get the Message Out

- hang the banner in a prominent location
- invite the media to attend a session and spread the message
- make and frame small banners to sell as fund-raisers

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

- *Information and Rights* is a handbook for abuse victims produced by Alberta Solicitor General and Ministry of Public Security. The handbook identifies family violence as a crime. It explains the cycle of abuse, legal remedies to increase safety, the effects of violence on victims and information on the *Protection Against Family Violence Act*.  
To access the 2003 *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-2003)* Visit the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare:  
<http://www.cecw-cepb.ca>
- For more information on “The Destructive Impact of Domestic Violence on Children” and related issues, visit these websites:
  - ChildTrauma Academy: [www.childtrauma.org](http://www.childtrauma.org)
  - California Attorney General’s Safe From the Start Project:  
[www.safefromthestart.org](http://www.safefromthestart.org)
  - Scholastic website, A Violence Prevention Approach by Dr. Perry:  
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/bruceperry/index.htm>
- *Ten Things to Do Instead of Hitting* is a video to guide children in building strategies for handling anger in nondestructive ways. For more information visit the Alberta Teachers’ Association Library website  
[www.ecec.ab.ca/ececweb/atalibraryvideos.html](http://www.ecec.ab.ca/ececweb/atalibraryvideos.html) or call 447-9400.
- Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access information on parenting skills, preventing family violence, dealing with bullying, the impacts of family violence at different ages and a variety of other resources, such as:
  - activities for kindergarten to senior high students
  - safe Internet use
  - abuse in sporting environments
  - how an abusive partner can affect parenting
  - understanding adolescent relationship violence
  - school approaches to anti-violence

# Girls and Women

IT'S *your* BUSINESS



Everyone has the right to live in a safe environment, free from violence, abuse and neglect. Sadly, homes can be one of the most dangerous places for violence towards girls and women. When violence occurs, it is often inflicted by someone in a position of trust, such as a husband, intimate partner, father or other relative.

Abusers are typically repeat offenders, protected by the culture of silence that often surrounds domestic violence. This stance has contributed to a lack of appropriate programs and policies to help victims seek help. It also hinders supports to help perpetrators change abusive behaviours and develop respectful relationships.

Although many consider domestic problems private, it is important to note that both men and women are increasingly helping themselves and others by speaking out against family violence.

The United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women provides a basis for defining gender-based violence. According to Article One of the declaration, violence against women is: “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”.

The United Nations has defined violence against women as gender-based violence, to acknowledge that such violence is rooted in gender inequality and is often tolerated and condoned by laws, institutions and community norms.

Violence against women is not only a profound violation of human rights, but also a costly impediment to a country’s national development. Visit <http://econ.worldbank.org> to access: Preventing and responding to gender-based violence in middle and low-income countries: a global review and analysis (Policy, research working paper; no. WPS 3618).

## Facts about Women at Risk

Victim behaviour focuses on ensuring survival. Responses may include:

- minimizing or denying violence
- taking responsibility for violence
- protecting the perpetrator
- using alcohol or drugs
- self-defence
- seeking help
- remaining in the abusive relationship

It is generally understood that up to 70 per cent of individuals experiencing family violence do not report it to the authorities. When family violence awareness and education are increased, higher levels of reporting commonly occur. This makes it important to understand the scope of issues that relate to family violence.

- Twelve per cent of Canadian women aged 18 to 24 reported at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner in a one-year period, compared with the national average of three per cent of all married or cohabiting women (*Johnson 1996, 148*).
- Two-thirds of women admitted to shelters in 1995 were under the age of 35, while fewer than five per cent were over 55 years of age (*Statistics Canada 1998, 13*).
- In Canada, 21 per cent of women abused by a partner were assaulted during pregnancy, and 40 per cent reported that the abuse began during pregnancy. (*Statistics Canada, Family Violence in Canada, 1999*.) Abuse often begins or worsens during pregnancy, when a woman is most vulnerable, and most dependent on her partner's support (*Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women*).<sup>1</sup>
- Many women and their children are most vulnerable when attempting to leave an abusive partner. Between 1974 and 1992, six times as many women were killed by their husbands while separating than while co-residing.<sup>2</sup>
- Violence against women crosses socioeconomic lines. (*Statistics Canada, Family Violence in Canada, p. 19*.) However, low-income women may get trapped in abusive relationships because of a lack of financial resources for housing and income support.<sup>3</sup>
- Women involved in prostitution are at enormous risk of sexual and physical assault, ongoing abuse and murder. Women in other occupations, such as health care workers and women in the military, are also more vulnerable to violence. (*Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, pp. 41-44*)
- Foreign domestic workers employed at low wages and isolated in private homes are vulnerable to threats of deportation if they complain of physical or sexual abuse. They are often unaware of their legal rights or available services. (*Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, pp. 41-44*)



1 Lent, "Obstetrical issues in wife abuse," *Canadian Journal of Obstetrics/Gynaecology & Women's Health Care* 4(5) 1992, pp. 330-33, as cited in *Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women*, 1993, p. 34.

2 Rebecca Kong, "Criminal harassment," *Juristat* 16(12) 1996.

3 Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association, *Inuit Women: The Housing Crisis and Violence*. Prepared for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Ottawa: Pauktuutit, c. 1995) p.1.

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- Women who have difficulty speaking English face enormous barriers in accessing services and dealing with the justice system, making it even more difficult to escape abuse.  
Marika Morris, Factsheet, Violence against women and girls, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women 2002.
- Some studies show that as many as 80 per cent of Aboriginal women have been abused by a partner. (*LaRocque, 1994*).
- Forty per cent of women with disabilities have been raped, abused or assaulted. More than half (53 per cent) of women disabled from birth or early childhood have been abused. (*Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD) www.accd.net (Morin and Biosvert, 1992)*)
- Sixty-four per cent of the victims of female homicide died at the hands of their partner (*Statistics Canada 2003, <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/040929/do40929a.htm>*)

### EXAMPLES OF WOMAN ABUSE

Abuse can take many different forms, as described under What is Child Abuse? on page 5 of this guide. These examples describe the types of behaviours associated with wife abuse.

- Physical abuse includes any slapping, punching, kicking, choking, or action that causes physical pain. It is being slammed against a wall or being injured with a weapon or object. Brutal beatings can result in bruising, lacerations, broken bones or death.
- Psychological abuse describes living with the constant fear of threats of violence against a woman, her children or her friends and relatives. It includes being harassed at work by phone calls or visits, the destruction of prized possessions and even suicide threats of the victimizer. The intent is to control the behaviour of the woman. Threats of violence are illegal under the terms of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.
- Emotional abuse is the ongoing experience of criticism, name-calling and insults alone or in front of friends and relatives. It includes unjust blaming and false accusations about loyalties, as well as controls on time, activities and actions. Women who are emotionally abused find it very difficult to seek employment or a promotion, keep friends or join groups outside the home.
- Sexual abuse or marital rape occurs when a woman is forced against her will to perform sexual acts, or is hurt or injured during intercourse. A 1983 Canadian law makes it a crime for a man to sexually assault his wife or partner.
- Financial abuse means having no access to the family's money. The woman may live in a comfortable house, wear good clothing, have children well equipped with toys and luxuries, but have no control over financial matters. She may have no say over what is spent, saved or purchased. She is not allowed any money for personal use. Ironically, marriages that result in divorce give women a 50 per cent right to family assets.

### GET HELP!

Find a list of Alberta shelters by:

- calling the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS): (780) 456-7000 or toll free 1-866-331-3933
- visiting the ACWS website: [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca)
- calling your local police, RCMP detachment or Tribal Police
- visiting the Alberta Children's Services website: [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB)



## Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile: 2005

*Excerpted from Statistics Canada: The Daily, Thursday, July 14, 2005*  
[www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050714/do50714a.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050714/do50714a.htm)

- An estimated seven per cent of women and six per cent of men in a current or previous spousal relationship encountered spousal violence during the five years up to and including 2004, according to a comprehensive new report on family violence. The report, which uses data from the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS), showed that the overall five-year rate of spousal violence has remained unchanged at seven per cent since 1999. This means that an estimated 653,000 women and 546,000 men encountered some form of violence by a current or previous spouse or common-law partner.
- Rates of spousal violence were highest among certain segments of the population: those aged 15 to 24; those in relationships of three years or less; those who had separated; and those in common-law unions. However, rates of spousal violence amongst previous partners who had had contact with their former partner in the past five years declined from 28 per cent in 1999 to 21 per cent in 2004 for women and from 22 per cent to 16 per cent for men.
- While about three-quarters of these individuals indicated that the violence occurred during the marital or common-law union, one-half of women victims and one-third of men victims said the violence either continued or occurred after separation.
- Data show that the nature and consequences of spousal violence were more severe for women than for men. Female victims of spousal violence were more than twice as likely to be injured as male victims. Women were also three times more likely to fear for their life, and twice as likely to be the targets of more than 10 violent episodes.
- Overall, 11 per cent of women and seven per cent of men aged 15 and older stated that they were stalked in a way that caused them to fear for their safety or the safety of someone close to them. This was the equivalent of 1.4 million women and just under one million men. Among victims of stalking, nine per cent of women reported that they had been stalked by either a current or previous spouse, or a common-law partner, twice the proportion of four per cent among men.
- Between 1961 and 2003, one in 10 solved homicides were cases in which the suspect took his or her own life following the homicide. About three-quarters of these victims of homicide-suicides were killed by a family member.
- Rates of spousal violence were found to be highest among certain segments of the population. People who were aged 15 to 24 were more than twice as likely to be victims of spousal violence as those 35 and older. Rates were three times higher in relationships of three years or less than relationships that were more than ten years in duration. Data also showed that rates of spousal violence were three times more likely in common-law relationships than marital unions.
- People whose partner was a heavy drinker (a heavy drinker was defined as someone who consumes five or more drinks on five or more occasions in a given month) were six times more likely to experience spousal violence than those whose partner never drank in excess of five drinks.

- In cases of current relationships in which emotional abuse existed, 25 per cent of women and 19 per cent of men experienced violence. Examples of emotional abuse include being isolated from family and friends, having no access to family income, or having property or possessions destroyed. In contrast, in current relationships where there was no emotional abuse, one per cent of women and two per cent of men experienced violence.
- The survey indicates that the risk of violence is particularly elevated at the time of separation, especially in the case of women. One-third (34 per cent) of women who experienced violence during their relationship said that the violence increased in severity or frequency after separation. The number of men who reported violence during their relationship was too small to produce reliable estimates.
- Data suggest that Aboriginal people were three times more likely to be victims of spousal violence. Overall, 21 per cent of Aboriginal people, or 24 per cent of Aboriginal women and 18 per cent of Aboriginal men, said that they had suffered violence from a current or previous spouse or common-law partner in the five-year period up to 2004. This was the case for seven per cent of non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal victims were also more likely to state that they were beaten, choked, threatened with or had a gun or knife used against them, or were sexually assaulted.

## Women Abused by Intimate Partners

By Dr. Leslie M. Tutty, with RESOLVE\* Alberta

*"His behaviour over the last six months was getting much more erratic. He started pushing me. He'd been having an affair with a woman for about a year and I found out that he had picked her up and threw her down a flight of stairs. I was really starting to be afraid."*

*"I'm crying and my head's really hurting. Every time, he hurt me more in the sensitive part of your head. He'd bang your head in the wall..."*

*"He tried to start an argument and I went downstairs, took the clothes out of the dryer and said, 'I'm going to start going out too if you're going out.' He ran to where he kept the guns and loaded the gun. I sat in the living room and he came in with the gun pointed at me. He shot above my head in the wall. He was going back to the bedroom to reload and I ran after him and let out a scream."*

The above are quotes from Alberta women about the abuse they experience from their intimate partners. They show a range from emotional to physical abuse to threats to kill. Woman abuse is serious and costly to all members of families with an abusive member, but particularly to the victims. Canada's 1999 General Social Survey conducted by Statistics Canada (2000) concluded that seven per cent of individuals in married or common-law relationships had experienced some form of violence by an intimate partner in the past five years. The rates of violence were similar for women (eight per cent) and men (seven per cent): about 690,000 Canadian women and 549,000 men.

However, this national study added important questions about the context and consequences of the violence. These results clarify that abuse against women by male partners is more often repetitive and life threatening: women were three times more likely to be injured and twice as likely to experience chronic, ongoing assaults (more than 10 incidents); disclosed more serious emotional consequences including depression, anxiety attacks, sleeping problems and lowered self-esteem; were afraid of their partners for their lives to a significantly greater extent (38 per cent of women compared to seven per cent of men).

In 1993, the Violence Against Women Survey indicated that Alberta had one of the highest lifetime rates of assault against women. Although the rates of spousal assault appear to be declining since then, Alberta's rate remains high compared to the rest of Canada: 11 per cent compared to eight per cent (*Statistics Canada, 1999*).

The nature of intimate partner abuse against women is well documented. As noted by Tutty and Goard (2002):

*"While the context of initial violent acts may be a couple disagreement, it is often about control or jealousy. In general, however, the force of the violence far outweighs the import of the precipitating issue. Women are not simply pushed, shoved or slapped, they are beaten or injured where they are most vulnerable. Women abused by intimate partners often identify their first pregnancy as the start of the violence. The physical aggression may be directed at the baby in her belly or other female parts such as her breasts or genitals."*

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Marital rape and sexual exploitation are often aspects of the abuse. Physical abuse comes immediately to mind when we think about abuse, but psychological abuse, including deliberately hurtful comments and degrading sexual slurs, erode women's self-esteem over time. Partners are often extremely jealous or force women to account for their whereabouts at all times. Financial abuse, taking control of the family income, including her pay-cheque, and failing to provide adequate money to cover food, and other family basic needs, is not uncommon.

Woman abuse often extends beyond the relationship in the form of stalking and criminal harassment (*Beattie, 2003*). Abused women are often threatened with having their children kidnapped. Some research suggests that woman and children are at more risk of being murdered by partners after they have left the relationship.

Threats to kill women (and perhaps the children) are common in seriously abusive relationships and raise the level of fear to new heights. Some abused women and their children are murdered by their partners. Again, Alberta reportedly has one of the highest rates of domestic homicide in the country: "Between 1974 and 2000, an average of 10 women and three men were murdered each year by their spouses (*Statistics Canada, 2000*).

Canadian women who are immigrants, disabled or of Aboriginal background are at even more risk of serious abuse from an intimate partner (*Green, 1996; MacLeod & Shin, 1994; Rivers-Moore, 1993; Sobsey, 2002*). Addressing the needs of these women requires specialized services with a more complex understanding of their experiences.

### THE IMPACT OF WOMAN ABUSE

What are the effects on women of living with an abusive partner? As one can imagine, living with an abusive partner is stressful and women may seek medical assistance for stress-related physical, or mental health problems such as anxiety, depression or substance abuse (*Ristock, 1995; Tutty, 1998*). However, these are best seen as the result of living in an assaultive relationship rather than as predisposing factors to enter into such partnerships. Rather than seeing the symptoms simply as individual issues, medical and mental health professionals are advised to ask about the context of the women's lives. Seeing the anxiety as reflecting trauma, rather than a mental health disorder, and providing support, rather than medication, has been recommended by many advocates for abused women (*Walker, 1991*).

Further though, since considerable research has documented the traumas and negative consequences for women who live with abusive partners, we are at risk of perceiving the women as "helpless" victims – not seeing their strengths and coping abilities to both endure abuse and, ultimately, decide to leave. Acknowledging their resilience and finding ways to support their strengths are critical aspects of intervention (*Tutty, in press*).

## SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

There are more than 500 shelters for battered women in Canadian communities. Not all women leaving abusive relationships require shelter services. The 1999 Statistics Canada national survey found that only 11 per cent of women who had experienced spousal violence in the past five years had used a shelter. However, the women who utilize shelter services are often those that have the fewest resources and would have no-where else to go but a transition house.

Support groups are another important program to assist abused women, whether offered by shelters or community agencies (Tutty & Rothery, 2002). Research on the efficacy of these groups has supported their use.

\* RESOLVE Alberta is part of RESOLVE, a tri-prairie research network that co-ordinates and supports research aimed at ending violence, especially violence involving girls and women. The RESOLVE network is affiliated with the University of Calgary, University of Saskatchewan, University of Manitoba, University of Regina, University of Alberta, University of Winnipeg, and Brandon University

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### Dating Violence

Dating violence can occur to individuals at any age, with any amount of dating experience. It happens in both heterosexual and lesbian relationships. Dating violence is often hidden. Embarrassed, ashamed or humiliated, women may be reluctant to discuss their experiences. They may not recognize certain behaviours, such as “game-playing” or threats and other actions are abusive. Romantic views of love may cause someone to accept violence for the sake of maintaining a relationship.

Please visit page 16 of this guide to learn about Teens and Dating Violence. This section explores the different types of abuse that can be encountered, as well as strategies to avoid risky situations. Further reading suggestions are also provided at the end of this section of the guide under Additional Resources.

### Sexual Violence

*By the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres*

Sexual violence is not an easy topic to talk about. It’s an ugly issue. Most people want to think that sexual violence is somebody else’s problem, but it’s not. It’s everybody’s business. Survivors of sexual violence are boys and girls, women and men, young and old. They are our families, our neighbours – they are people we meet everyday in our communities. No one would argue that sexual violence is ugly. But unless we talk about it, unless we confront it directly, there will never be a chance of encouraging people who are survivors to come forward for help or of preventing it from happening in the first place. And if survivors don’t talk about it, if they don’t come forward for help, we have no way of holding offenders accountable, and this puts the safety and integrity of our communities at risk.

#### FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Victims of sexual assault and sexual abuse are boys and girls, women and men, young and old. They are people we meet everyday in our communities.
- Thirty-nine per cent of women in Canada experience at least one incident of sexual assault after the age of sixteen (*Statistics Canada, 1993*).
- Only six per cent of these women report their experience of sexual assault to the police – the other 94 per cent remain the silent majority (*Statistics Canada, 1993*).
- In a 1991 Canadian study, about four per cent of boys and 10 per cent of girls experienced severe sexual abuse before the age of 17 (*MacMillan, Fleming & Trocme, 1997*).
- Often, people think sexual abuse affects only women and girls – when in fact 14 per cent of the clients of the sexual assault centres in Alberta are male – mostly adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse (*AASAC, 2004*).
- Individuals who are sexually abused as children are more likely to be sexually assaulted again as adults (*Van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996*). A cycle that continues without intervention.



- Most sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows – in Alberta about half of these are committed by a family member (AASAC, 2004).
- Sexual assault and sexual abuse are crimes. These crimes hurt individuals, families and communities in Alberta.
- If not addressed, the long-term consequences of sexual abuse in our communities include suicide, addictions, physical and mental illness, chronic unemployment, family break-ups, junior and high school dropouts and juvenile prostitution.
- Healing and recovery are possible. Sexual Assault Centres provide a safe place for that healing to begin.
- Sexual Assault Centres offer programs to all members of the community at no cost. They include: crisis services, counselling, police and court support, education, outreach and volunteer support.

To find out how to access these programs, log on to the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres' website at [www.aasac.ca](http://www.aasac.ca) and click Need Help Now.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- Support the prosecution of offenders to the fullest extent.
- Learn about the nature and extent of the issue of sexual violence.
- Challenge offensive behaviour such as sexist language, bragging about sexual conquests or negative comments about either gender.
- Learn what 'consent' is and is not by reviewing the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centre website at [www.aasac.ca](http://www.aasac.ca) and click Need Help Now.
- Talk about and discuss the issue of sexual violence. Be open to hearing about the topic of sexual violence, and about other people's experiences of sexual violence.
- Tell survivors that there is help available. Tell them to log on to [www.aasac.ca](http://www.aasac.ca) to find out where they can get free confidential support in Alberta. You can make a difference. Talk about it. It's your business.

Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres, (AASAC) is an effective provincial organization that provides leadership, coordination and a unified voice on issues of sexual violence while increasing recognition and support for sexual assault centres in Alberta. AASAC understands sexual violence is part of the pattern of family violence.

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### Abuse and Disabilities

*By the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities*

Women with disabilities in Canada “face the threat and the reality of all forms of violence confronting non-disabled women, but their disability compounds, alters, and increases their vulnerability” (*Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women*).

#### FACTS:

- Eighty-three per cent of women with disabilities will be abused in their lifetime (*Stimpson and Best, 1991*).
- An Alberta study found that 88 per cent of victims with disabilities knew their abusers (*Sobsey, 1988*).
- Forty per cent of women with developmental and/or learning disabilities will be victims of sexual abuse before they turn eighteen (*Morin and Biosvert, 1992*).
- More than 50 per cent of perpetrators in violence against persons with disabilities are paid caregivers, family members, or other persons with disabilities (*Sobsey and Doe, 1991*).
- Thirty-nine per cent of women with disabilities have been physically or sexually abused by their husbands (*Statistics Canada, 1994*).

#### WHY ARE WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES MORE VULNERABLE TO ABUSE?

The Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) suggests that women with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse because society’s perceptions of them are clouded by myths and stereotypes. Take a minute to examine your own perceptions of women with disabilities.

#### Have you ever thought that women with disabilities:

- Are like children?
- Are not sexual?
- Need you to make decisions for them?
- Are helpless and need our pity?
- Are overly sexual?
- Do not contribute to society?
- Need special treatment?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are perceiving women with disabilities in a way that increases their vulnerability to abuse.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Examine our perceptions regarding women with disabilities.
- Raise our own level of awareness and educate ourselves about the realities, not the myths, shaping the lives of women with disabilities in Alberta.
- Raise the awareness of others. By educating people in our homes, workplaces, volunteer organizations, and communities we can begin to challenge stereotypical views. We all have a role in making Alberta a safer place for women with disabilities. Together, we can make a difference!

## Domestic Violence in Lesbian Relationships

By Jane Oxenbury, M.Ed. C. Psych., 2005

### SOCIAL CONTEXT:

- Homophobia and heterosexism in society denies the reality of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender lives, including the existence of their relationships, and in particular abusive ones, while an average of 25-33 per cent of all same-sex relationships involve domestic violence.
- Services for abused and abusive lesbian individuals and families are limited and are not specialized for this community's unique need. It not unusual for persons in this community to experience a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the abuse when reporting to a therapist, social worker, medical personnel or police officer. Most are very reluctant to come forward due to homophobia and the fear that they will neither be believed by the service providers nor have confidentiality within their own community.

### FACTS:

- Lesbian partner violence leads to similar short and long-term physical and emotional health problems to those in heterosexual domestic violence.
- Partner violence includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, economic and spiritual abuse.
- Partner violence occurs in all segments of the gay community.
- Partner violence has nothing to do with sex roles or physical appearance.
- This is not "mutual battering;" one partner is controlling through abuse and the other is defending herself.
- Homophobia and heterosexism increase isolation in partner violence. Threats of being "outed," or revealed as homosexual to family, friends or workplace colleagues, threats to "out" children in their school or community and the lack of a legal position for the non-biological parent are used as a means to control a partner.
- The fear of having to "out" yourself if you talk about the abuse often keeps lesbian women in silence.

### SCREENING AND RISK ASSESSMENT:

- Be aware of your own homophobic, discriminatory or stereotyped attitude and views.
- Make your space gay-friendly and accessible for the lesbian community.
- Be aware that women may be victims in one relationship and abusers in another.
- Be aware of legal, custody and access limitations and issues for lesbian women.
- Ask for the names of the last four partners, including the most recent abusive one. This ensures safety and confidentiality can be upheld in counselling, groups and housing, as well as preventing those who are abusers in one relationship and victims in another, from being grouped with those they victimized.

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### SAFETY PLANNING:

- Lesbians can legally apply for a peace bond or restraining order against an abusive partner.
- Learn about local partner violence resources and referrals for lesbian women.
- Discuss how to deal with possible responses of police and shelters to lesbian same-sex domestic violence, e.g. homophobia, minimization.

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## Human Rights and Citizenship Branch – Women's Issues

*Violence against women in society seriously affects the ability of women to achieve equality. It is not only the incidence of violence against women which limits women's lives, but the fear of violence which affects their daily existence, how they dress, where they go, with whom they associate, and their mode of transportation. Violence against women continues to be a significant and persistent social and economic problem in Canada with serious impacts on our health, justice and social services systems.<sup>4</sup>*

Alberta Community Development, Human Rights and Citizenship Branch is mandated to focus on women's issues, which includes violence against women and girls. Work is accomplished both provincially and as part of Alberta's participation in the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Forum of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women.

This Forum of Ministers has met annually for the past 24 years. Violence against women is a forum topic that persists, given its serious impacts on the lives of individuals, as well as all of society.

At the 2003 Annual Meeting held in Edmonton, the FPT Status of Women Ministers agreed to focus attention on the issues and needs of Aboriginal women. At their 2004 meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ministers strengthened this commitment by agreeing to prioritize attention on violence prevention for Aboriginal women.

## Safety Planning

The safety planning tools below are guidelines to help an abused person organize practical methods of obtaining safety during violent incidents. Safety planning tools are also valuable if choosing to leave a relationship.

The tools help the abused anticipate problems and make advance decisions on staying as safe as possible. The well-being of children is an important element, with safety strategies for children also defined. The safety plan should direct abused women and families to community resources.

Creating and using a safety plan is empowering. Ideally, it will be made with the help of someone trained in family violence, such as social workers, shelter workers and counsellors. If that is not possible or practical, a safety plan can be made independently, or with someone who is trusted.

The risk level will influence decisions. It is very important to carefully assess the current threat level before creating a safety plan. Factors include pregnancy, access to weapons, past threats and assaults, abuse of pets, substance abuse and recent separation.

The safety plan must be kept in a place where the abuser will not see it, such as the home of someone trustworthy where the abuser cannot get it. Safety will be compromised if the abuser becomes aware of the plan. If there is a risk the abuser will find the safety plan, the information should be memorized and paper or electronic copies destroyed.

The following *Planning Safety for Violent Situations* is adapted from information created for the Protocols Project by Community Initiatives Against Family Violence.

Use the following safety planning tools AFTER completing a risk assessment. Contact your local shelter or the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters at (780) 456-7000 or toll free 1-866-331-3933; or visit their website at [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca) if you require information on risk assessment.

***Always BELIEVE any woman who says she is in danger.***

***If the threat is imminent, help her connect with emergency services immediately, such as the police, RCMP or tribal police.***

***You can also take her to the nearest women's emergency shelter.***

<sup>4</sup> *Assessing Violence Against Women: A Statistical Profile*. Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, 2002, p. 3.

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Planning Safety for Violent Situations

*Be aware by paying attention to changes in mood and behaviour. Be ready to take action!*

The warning signs that \_\_\_\_\_ is likely to become abusive are:

\_\_\_\_\_

When I see these signs I can: \_\_\_\_\_

What are my personal limits? What would have to happen for me to leave? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **You cannot always avoid violence. Reduce harm and get help with these strategies:**

- When an argument erupts I will move to a safe room (Try to avoid bathrooms, garage, kitchen, places near weapons or rooms without access to an outside exit.)
- I can teach the people I spend time with to get out of the room where the abuse is occurring. We can identify a safe room with a phone and preferably a lock on the door.
- I can teach my children to call 911 out of the abuser's sight and to leave the phone off the hook to prevent 911 from calling back and alerting the abuser.
- I will have a safe package or list prepared and stored in a place I can easily access and that will not be found.

### ESCAPE STRATEGIES

#### **Plan A**

If I have to escape quickly I can go to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

During the day, I will get there by: \_\_\_\_\_

During the night I will get there by: \_\_\_\_\_

I will take the children with me if possible. Otherwise I will get the kids by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Safety precautions upon arrival: \_\_\_\_\_

How long can I stay there? \_\_\_\_\_



# IT'S *your* BUSINESS

## Plan B

If my first plan does not work, I can go to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

During the day, I will get there by: \_\_\_\_\_

During the night I will get there by: \_\_\_\_\_

I will take the children with me if possible. Otherwise I will get the kids by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Safety precautions upon arrival: \_\_\_\_\_

How long can I stay there? \_\_\_\_\_

## Plan C

Go to a shelter. The shelter will provide transportation.

## ONGOING SAFETY

I can tell people I am in an abusive relationship and discuss how they can help me be safe. I can let them know about any custody and no contact orders that exist. I will instruct them exactly what to do if \_\_\_\_\_ calls or comes around.

Precautions I will take at my work: \_\_\_\_\_

Precautions I will put in place at school: \_\_\_\_\_

Precautions I will put in place at day care: \_\_\_\_\_

Precautions to discuss with neighbours: \_\_\_\_\_

Precautions to discuss with friends: \_\_\_\_\_

Precautions to discuss with family members: \_\_\_\_\_

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

- Rehearse escape plan with children and others at risk.
- Learn to erase phone numbers and history on computers.
- Open a separate bank account and save as much as possible.
- Have money or bus tickets hidden away in case I need to leave in a hurry.
- Memorize phone number for taxicab service.
- Identify convenience stores, gas stations and other places in my neighbourhood that are open 24 hours and can be used as safer places to go to wait for help.
- Prepare a safety package containing only what I can carry with me.

**Safe Package – if I have to leave quickly these are the things I should try to take with me.**

### **Discuss access to safe package**

Hide safety plan information so that the abuser does not find them

- suitcase hidden
- all items collected in one room or area of the house
- list hidden
- other

Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access a more detailed personalized safety plan used by Community Initiatives Against Family Violence.

## What You Can Do in Your Community

- learn how to spot the signs of abuse and become aware of the resources available in your community to help those who are in violent or abusive situations
- learn about family violence and woman abuse, including: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect
- learn about the indicators of woman abuse by visiting the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters website at [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca)
- read about woman abuse and family violence on the Alberta Children's Services website at [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB)
- have educational information readily available for staff and families about family violence as well as information about where they can go for help
- find out if there is a women's shelter in your community or region
- create a resource list of service organizations and professionals in your community who can support women experiencing family violence
- encourage your local newspaper to advertise for free the phone numbers of women's shelters and distress lines
- encourage your local newspaper to give free newspapers to women's shelters
- plan an education and awareness activity or event
- display information about woman abuse in your workspace so that others know it is a safe place to talk about family violence
- collect donations for your local shelter, using the slogan to "pack a weekend bag" when requesting contributions because women and children often have to leave home without one
- raise awareness in your community by initiating conversation about family violence and abuse issues
- raise awareness by asking a shelter representative to speak about family violence or arrange to bring the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters' Silent Witness Display (an exhibit representing women and third party victims of domestic homicide) to your workplace or a community gathering place
- talk with the Human Resources Department at your workplace to inform yourself about support services available for victims of family violence
- if safe to do so, give practical support such as childcare, transportation or information to someone trying to leave an abusive relationship



# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

- Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access information on raising family violence awareness, promoting prevention, role models, dating violence, understanding different types of harassment and a variety of other resources, such as:
  - Alberta Council of Women's Shelter Placemat
  - How an Abusive Partner can Affect You as a Parent
  - Canadian Red Cross: Prevention in Motion
- Visit The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities website at [www.accd.net](http://www.accd.net) to view published research on the increased risk women with disabilities have in respect to experiencing violence.
- The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Status of Women have published numerous resources over the years on violence against women. Visit the Status of Women Canada website [www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/index\\_e.html](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/index_e.html) to access topics available at no charge including:
  - Assessing Violence Against Women: A Statistical Profile (December 2002)
  - Preventing Violence Against Women: A Strategic Framework (July 1999)
- For information on the work of the Human Rights and Citizenship Branch on women's issues, or on the work of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Status of Women Forum, visit the Human Rights and Citizenship Branch website [www.cd.gov.ab.ca](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca) or call (780) 427-3116 (toll-free by dialing 310-0000). TTY service for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing: (780) 427-1597 or toll-free 1-800-232-7215.
- For more information on Domestic Violence in Lesbian Relationships, contact:
  - Jane M. Oxenbury, M.Ed., C. Psych.: (403) 255-7004
  - Carolyn Anderson, Ph. D.: (403) 440-8974
  - Peer Support Services for Abused Women: Women Hurting Women – free workshop for service providers: (403) 234-7337
  - Safety Under the Rainbow: A family Violence and Bullying Initiative for AB GLBT Communities: Linda McKay-Panos/Melissa Luhtanen – (403) 220-2505 or Jane M. Oxenbury, M.Ed., C.Psych. – (403) 255-7004

# Boys and Men

IT'S *your* BUSINESS



Family Violence is everyone's business. Boys and men may wonder what family violence has to do with them if they are not directly impacted. Men have a unique and important role to play. Why? Because boys look to men to learn how to be men, and because men listen to other men.

Men, as well as women, can be abused by intimate partners. Both victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence can take responsibility to educate themselves on making healthy choices. They can explore the many services available to help change attitudes and behaviours to ensure better lifestyles for all household members.

Family violence directly affects boys when they grow up in homes where violence and abuse occur. Sometimes boys are openly abused, other times they are witnesses. Sometimes they are forced by a perpetrator to participate in the abuse of other family members.

Both men and women have worked hard to bring the important issue of family violence into public discussion. Men often support these efforts quietly and behind the scenes. Many feel it is now time for boys and men to be actively and openly involved in preventing family violence. Fathers, brothers, sons, uncles, grandfathers, grandsons, male friends, neighbours and colleagues of abused women can help by educating boys and men within their circles of influence.



## Did You Know?

- The dynamics of family violence within a relationship are varied and complex. Research in the past has recognized the misuse of power and control as one of the contributing factors to family violence.
- In 2003-04, approximately 10 per cent of the 40,000 crisis calls received at shelters across the province were from males. Crisis intervention services and referrals were provided as necessary, and shelters also linked callers to emergency, short-term emergency accommodation and other community-based family violence resources as requested.
- The Statistics Canada *Family Violence In Canada: A statistical Profile 2005* states: Over one-third of women victims said that the violence was reported to the police, compared to 17 per cent of men victims. In addition, 38 per cent of women who reported to the police also sought a restraining order.
- Scientifically acceptable data and research on male victims of intimate partner violence is now coming to the attention of service providers. Additionally, abused men from Aboriginal or other ethno cultural groups and men in same sex relationships have not typically been represented in family violence research studies.
- Comprehensive data collection on the service needs of abused men has not been undertaken in Alberta. Anecdotal information through the Strathmore shelter informs us that the male clients most often request referral, advocacy and access to services for children. Lack of affordable housing, low income and lack of financial resources are cited as barriers to successful transition from shelter back to the community for men with children.
- Findings from a 2003 Statistics Canada report show that most victims of family violence seek informal support rather than formal assistance. The majority (80 per cent) of male victims and almost half (48 per cent) of female victims who experienced spousal violence during the five years prior to the study did not use any type of social service agency for assistance. Only 11 per cent of female victims and none of the male victims used a shelter. They tended to stay with friends or relatives, and have been referred to as members of the "hidden homeless".  
(Statistics Canada 2003)
- Abused men often have separate and distinct service needs from those of women. Male victims may prefer accessing information and services through non-traditional outreach approaches to support their needs than through traditional residential based shelter services.



***Call your local Child and Family Services Authority\*; the police, RCMP, tribal police or women's shelter to find services for men abused by an intimate partner.***

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\* A listing of Alberta's Child and Family Services Authorities is featured on page 112 of this guide.

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

- All women’s shelters or other service providers can help men with children who identify risk of violence with access to short-term emergency hotel accommodation province wide through Crisis Units in Edmonton and Calgary. Additionally, the Strathmore shelter accommodates abused men with children.
- Debating gender specific statistics and research methodologies is often a barrier to solution-focused discussion. The vast amount of family violence research has focused on women and children as victims and men as perpetrators. It will take a concerted effort to build positive relationships and sufficient trust to encourage stakeholders to work together to identify the priority services needs and resources to enhance services to male victims.

### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence can occur to individuals at any age, with any amount of dating experience. It happens in both heterosexual and gay relationships. Dating violence is often hidden. Feeling embarrassed, ashamed or humiliated, men may be reluctant to discuss their experiences. They may not recognize certain behaviours, such as “game-playing” or threats and other actions are abusive. Romantic views of love may cause someone to accept violence for the sake of maintaining a relationship.

Please visit page 16: Teens and Dating Violence to explore the different types of abuse that can be encountered, as well as strategies to avoid risky situations. The Additional Resources page at the end of this section of the guide also provides suggestions for further reading.

#### **WHERE TO GO FOR HELP**

- talk to a school counsellor
- call your local police, RCMP detachment or tribal police
- visit the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters website at [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca)

## Male Victims of Female Violence

By Richard J. Gelles, Ph.D., School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania

Perhaps the most contentious and least understood aspect of domestic violence is the issue of female-to-male partner violence. In the early years of advocacy, research, and policy on family violence, violence toward men was explained away as exclusively carried out in self-defense, an insignificant or distracting aberration that took the focus off the true victims – women, or an overstated phenomenon resulting from methodological biases and errors in research. Although the extent and seriousness of violence toward men is not as great as violence toward women, not all female-to-male violence is done in self-defense. Research is consistent in finding higher than expected rates of violence toward men, and rather than being a distraction, violence toward men ought to be considered a significant part of the problem of domestic violence.

Nearly every representative survey of the problem of family violence finds higher than expected rates of violence toward men (for a full review see Straus, 2005). The rate is often the same or even higher than that reported for male-to-female violence. Moreover, surveys indicate that women initiate violence about as often as men (Straus, 2005).

Surveys of crime victims in the United States find higher rates of violence towards women than towards men – women's reports of victimization by partners or ex-partners is 10 times higher than reports by men (Rennison, 2003). The most recent analysis of the National Crime Victimization Survey projected 103,220 men who were victims of intimate partner violence (Rennison, 2003). Many more women are killed by their male partners in the United States – 1247 in 2000 compared to 440 women who murdered their male partners (Rennison, 2003).

The controversies notwithstanding, it is clear that women use violence towards their male partners, that a great deal of domestic violence is bi-directional, and that a small but important number of women are the sole perpetrators of violence in their intimate relationships.

Why should we be concerned with the issue of male victims of domestic violence? First, there is the obvious harm done by these attacks – from injury to death. Second, there are the costs to society of the harm produced by violence towards men – health care costs, child welfare costs, criminal justice costs, etc. But even more important, female-to-male violence, even if done in self defence, is not an effective way of mitigating violence, research indicates that women who use violence report that it tends to lead to more, not less, violence by their partners (Gelles & Straus, 1988).

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- Dr. Richard Gelles, 3701 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104. Ph: (215) 898-5542 Fax (215) 573-2099. gelles@sp2.upenn.edu

## IF YOU ARE A MALE VICTIM OF FEMALE VIOLENCE:

- know that you are not alone
- do not blame yourself for your partner's behaviour
- understand that abuse rarely only happens once
- try to address conflicts before they escalate into violence
- seek appropriate professional help

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Men Abused by Intimate Partners

By Dr. Leslie M. Tutty, with RESOLVE Alberta

*“During her periods she would get very violent. She would attack me and when we were young, fine, I just turned my back and let her pound me to get rid of her frustrations. But as the years went on it became more violent, and I couldn’t just ignore it because she was hurting me.”*

*“Physical abuse, the odd confrontation was two or three times. What I felt was emotional and mental abuse. There was never any threat that she would do me physical harm. She got angry enough a couple of times where there was physical; she hit me once and gave me a black eye, but I never felt it as a threat. This fear of failure is maybe more important to a man than the threat of physical violence.”*

*“There were only three incidents where I was hit. On two of them I was hit across the head with enough strength that it made my glasses fly off and in another incident I was hit in the back and my shirt was literally ripped off my back.”*

These are the words of three Alberta men who came forward to tell their stories of being abused by women intimate partners. These men claimed that few were interested in their abuse not only because they are men, but because men should never admit to being a victim, especially at the hands of a woman.

Perhaps the most contentious issue on the field of family violence is how often men are abused and the effects on male victims (*Sarantokos, 2004*). While most Canadians do not abuse their partners, in the latest national Canadian study on intimate partner violence, the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization (*Statistics Canada, 2000*), men reported being victimized by women to a similar degree as women have been victimized by men. “The five-year rate of violence was similar for women (eight per cent) and men (seven per cent). Overall, this amounts to approximately 690,000 women and 549,000 men who had a current or former partner in the past five years and reported experiencing at least one incident of violence.”

These equally reported rates by men and women are substantiated in over 40 studies worldwide that used a similar sociological telephone survey using a tool entitled the Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS) (*Lupri, 2004*). Canada’s GSS, which utilized the CTS, added additional questions about the context and consequences of violence. Although the abuse against women by male partners is more serious than the abuse of men by women partners, men are victimized. For example, while women were more than twice as likely as men to report being beaten, five times more likely to report being choked, and almost twice as likely to report being threatened by or having a gun or knife used against them, men were also beaten, choked and threatened with weapons. “Men were more likely than women to report being slapped (57 per cent versus 40 per cent), having something thrown at them (56 per cent versus 44 per cent) and being kicked, bit or hit (51 per cent versus 33 per cent).”

Men who received violent acts from their partners were abused repeatedly 54 per cent of the time (65 per cent of women), 13 per cent of these were victimized more than 10 times (26 per cent of women). The abuse reported by men who had experienced violence in the past five years led to injury 13 per cent of the time (40 per cent for women) and these injuries required medical attention. Seven per cent of these men feared for their lives (38 per cent of women)(*Statistics Canada, 2000*). Men are also murdered by female partners. In Canada in 2002, 16 men were killed by female partners (67 women) (*Statistics Canada, 2004*).

### THE IMPACT OF ABUSE ON MALE VICTIMS

What of the male victims' experiences of abuse? Researchers have extensively documented the effects on women of having been abused by male partners, but we know little about the effects of abusive behaviour by women on their male intimate partners. According to Canadian researchers Grandin, Lupri and Brinkerhoff (1997), both men and women who are either psychologically or physically abused reported emotional distress.

Two unpublished qualitative studies, both conducted in Alberta and cited in Tutty (1999), constitute one of three studies that attempt to understand the experiences of men abused by their intimate partners. Gregorash (1990) interviewed eight men, while Tutty (1997) reported on 10 interviews. Such qualitative studies are limited by small sample sizes, but the in-depth nature of the results is thought to balance the small numbers.

Across both studies, the 18 men ranged in age from 30 to 55. Only one was still married when interviewed; the rest were either separated or divorced. The relationships ranged from several years to 25 years, and most couples had children. There was quite a range in educational background for both men and women. A number of both the men and the women had university degrees and worked in professional jobs.

Much of the abuse was psychological rather than physical, although several men commented that they found the emotional worse than the physical. Two men reported no physical incidents, while the others reported at least one incident of physical abuse in which their wives scratched them with fingernails, hit with an object such as a wooden clothes-hanger or fist, or kicked them in the back. Four of the men were kicked or kneed in the groin. The men described their partners as being "enraged", "destroying things with a baseball bat", "attacking with scissors" or "threatening to do damage with a hat pin". One man had lost teeth in one incident; several reported being afraid of their wives during these attacks.

Although 11 of the men reacted to the abuse only by restraining their wives from hurting them, nine men admitted using aggressive behaviours toward their partners at some point. Most of this involved throwing an object, pushing, or grabbing, but three men admitted using more force by hitting or punching and one man forced sexual intercourse on his wife a number of times. As such, half of the men could be described as being in mutually violent relationships.

While some men reported only one or two incidents of serious behaviour on the part of their wives, others noted that the physical attacks were more chronic, occurring throughout the relationship. None of the men contacted a doctor to treat their injuries. Eight men claimed that at some point their partners either threatened to contact the police to charge them for being abusive or to get a restraining order or had done so.

The men described the abuse as continuing even after the marital separation. A number were involved in custody disputes and two men complained that they had been unjustly accused of child abuse and one of marital rape.

Migliaccio (2001) examined the narratives of 12 men who suffered mental, physical, or emotional abuse from their wives, obtaining information about these men's experiences, beliefs, and reactions to their violent marriages and how their fear of being feminized impacted their relationships, often prolonging the violence. All but one of these men had been physically abused and suffered bruises, lacerations and one case of minor

head trauma. The injuries were caused primarily by thrown objects (five), by weapons including steak knives (three) and scissors (one) among others. Ten of the twelve men sought medical assistance for the injuries.

### SERVICES FOR ABUSED MEN

Alberta's two major cities have services specific to abused men offered by professional counsellors: Calgary Counselling's Turn for the Better groups and the City of Edmonton Community Services, "From Chaos to Peace" groups. The National Clearinghouse of Canada has created a document listing services across the country for men (both victims of different forms of abuse and abuse perpetrators).

RESOLVE Alberta is part of RESOLVE, a tri-prairie research network that co-ordinates and supports research aimed at ending violence, especially violence involving girls and women. The RESOLVE network is affiliated with the University of Calgary, University of Saskatchewan, University of Manitoba, University of Regina, University of Alberta, University of Winnipeg, and Brandon University.

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## The Boy Code and Male Violence

*By William S. Pollack, Ph.D., Director, Centers for Men and Young Men, McLean Hospital, Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry Harvard Medical School and Consultant, Safe Schools Initiative, US Department of Education/United States Secret Service*

Like girls, boys may experience intense sadness, vulnerability and a troubling sense of isolation, disconnection and despair. While many boys experience deep emotional pain, their suffering is often difficult to detect. Boys may seem cheerful, playful and resilient while actually feeling lonely, afraid and desperate. Male behaviour is commonly summed up with the expression “boys will be boys.”

*The Boy Code* describes the pressures society imposes upon boys to follow a strict code of masculinity. The code often makes it very hard to notice when boys struggle with problems, depression or feelings of suicide.

The classic boy code model rests upon a premature, societal and culturally enforced emotional separation from mother and all things maternal and feminine, such as nurturing, empathy and emotional bonding. Encouraging boys to independently brave problems, stoically hide pain and avoid shaming themselves or those they care about imposes a unique set of expectations.

Society contributes to the masculine persona with media images, as well as attitudes expressed at home, school and sport settings. These rigid gender straitjackets push many boys to repress yearnings for love and connection. The result is impenetrable toughness that leaves them experiencing painful problems in isolation, from academic failure to drug abuse, friendship struggles to clinical depression, attention deficit disorder to suicide and murder.

Often representing core values of the dominant Caucasian Euro-American culture, the boy code shames young males into extreme self-containment, toughness, stoicism and separation. It shames young males away from their emotional vulnerability, interdependence and basic need for human connection when they need it most. Bullying, both physically and with cruel words are forms of shaming boys.

There is a well known series of boy code admonitions directed at young males, especially upon entering organized settings such as schools and sports around the ages of four or five. This includes phrases that diminish the expression of their full biosocial emotional range, such as: “Stand on your own two feet; be a little man; don’t be a mamma’s boy; big boys don’t cry; don’t act like a sissy...a wimp...a fag.” Too many boys are critically judged according to these standards, both by themselves and others.

Shamed from exhibiting normal vulnerability, boys become disconnected from healthy relations with each other and potentially supportive adults. Attempts to resist are met with additional cruel and endless shaming, a later predictor for violent adolescent behaviour.

Behind these masks of false invulnerability, ANGER is the one full emotion they are allowed to express.

Adolescent boys engage in the bulk of youth violence, with the vast majority of victims being other young males. When added to youth suicide data which shows males four to six times more likely to take their own lives, it is not surprising public health officials see this as a major prevention challenge.

We must dismantle and rewrite the boy code by maintaining greater positive connections with young males, through adult models of male caring behavior. Only then can our boys and young men begin to overcome the shame of expressing empathy, love and yearning for understanding which we have found to be central to their core genuine selves.

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

The following study provides an overview of a demonstration project designed to help male perpetrators change attitudes and behaviours.

### Domestic Violence Treatment Effectiveness Study

*Highlights of the Final Report, March 2005*

Alberta Mental Health Board, Kathy Cairns, PhD., Principal Investigator, May 2005

#### BACKGROUND

The HomeFront Project (Coordinated Community Response (CCR) domestic violence project) was a four-year national demonstration project that brought together law enforcement, the justice system, and community social service agencies to work collaboratively on reducing domestic violence in Calgary. The project began in May 2000 with the opening of the specialized domestic violence court – courtroom 412.

An important aspect of the HomeFront Project has been evaluation, one component of which is the *Domestic Violence Treatment Effectiveness Study*. This study was sponsored by the Alberta Mental Health Board (AMHB) and initiated in 2002.

#### OVERVIEW OF STUDY

The *Domestic Violence Treatment Effectiveness Study* focused specifically on Calgary Probation Services' referrals of male domestic violence offenders to one of three Calgary treatment programs: Calgary Counselling Centre, YWCA Sheriff King, and Forensic Assessment Outpatient Services (FAOS).

#### EVALUATION OF FINDINGS

Characteristics of the Offender Population: a total of 316 referrals were considered by the evaluation project, with 61 deemed "invalid." Of the 255 remaining cases, 164 completed treatment and form the primary study group.

#### Some of the key characteristics of the study population included:

- The mean age was 35.3.
- One third did not complete high school and one quarter had some technical school or university.
- The higher risk group (36 per cent of sample) tended to be younger, unemployed, in common-law relationships, had higher scores on mental health measures, were more likely to have active addictions and to have been charged with previous crimes against persons.
- Alcohol and drug abuse issues figured prominently.
- Significant mental health problems were found in one third of the overall sample.
- Forty per cent of the overall sample had a history of having breached conditions prior to the current charge.

#### Men who did complete treatment (completers) showed the following characteristics:

- Although they were less likely to have significant mental health problems than the offender group as a whole, even at pre-test, their scores were significantly reduced from pre to post-test
- Many individuals who remained in and completed treatment showed positive movement toward acceptance of personal responsibility and taking effective action to change their abusive behaviours

- Partners reported very little physical abuse occurring after treatment, but about 28 per cent report continuing verbal abuse.
- Cases that completed treatment had a significantly lower new charge rate than dropouts and no shows, with 6.1 per cent of treatment completers showing new charges compared to 23.7 per cent for those who did not complete.

**Men who did not complete treatment (non-completers) showed the following characteristics:**

- A higher number were unemployed and living common law.
- Many had alcohol/drug problems.
- Significantly higher rates of antisocial traits and alcohol/drug abuse.

## RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study lead to a series of recommendations to be considered as part of implementation of domestic violence treatment programs in Alberta communities. Treatment had a positive effect across the risk levels, with even the high-risk offenders showing significant improvement in mental health and recidivism rates.

- The minimum number of treatment sessions should be fifteen (30 hours), in accordance with Canadian standards and the outcomes of this study.
- Group therapy should be the standard treatment modality except when local conditions or specific client characteristics (e.g., cultural requirements) cannot support it. In those instances, the need for treatment and the requirement to fulfill the court mandate take precedence.
- Resources are required to support detailed mental health and addictions assessment, at least for medium and high-risk offenders.
- A single point of entry for offenders to the services assists in standardized assessment, referrals and data transfer among treatment providers.
- Frequent, random alcohol and drug screening are needed for all cases with active addictions, to ensure sobriety during treatment.
- Greater effectiveness in dealing expeditiously with breaches and warrants is required to prevent loss of cases from treatment. The study showed that, in many cases, the time lag between a warrant being issued in relation to a breach and the warrant being served was too long to allow return to treatment.
- An initial assessment, using specific indicators for higher risk case identification should be implemented at court so that case management can be varied to provide closer supervision to those at greatest risk of treatment dropout and/or re-offence.
- A centralized law-justice database, which would make information from the police and courts more accessible for determining risk, would assist in coordinating information regarding the type and extent of assessment and treatment required.

*The following study provides an overview of a provincial response to help perpetrators change their attitudes and behaviours.*

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Men and Boys Can Play a Critical Role in Ending Violence Against Women

By Dr. Michael Kaufman

When it comes to ending violence against women, men have a particular responsibility and a particular opportunity. We have a particular responsibility because although most men will never commit an act of personal violence against a woman, historically most of us have been silent about this violence. This has allowed lawmakers, health care professionals, police, judges and religious leaders – the majority of whom have been male – to disregard the problem of violence against women. Through our silence we have allowed the violence to continue. It stands to reason that we have an important responsibility for ending that silence.

We also have a particular opportunity. That is because boys and men value the words and example of other men. Men define manhood in the eyes of men. That means that, by speaking out against this violence, we can have a huge impact on our fellow men: on our sons and fathers, our brothers, our workmates and our friends.

Working effectively with men and boys to end violence against women does not – and here I want to emphasize, does not – mean appealing to a sense of collective guilt. Rather, we must appeal to the goodness of men and boys, to appeal to a sense of collective responsibility for bringing about change.

#### UNDERSTANDING MEN'S VIOLENCE

Working effectively to address and involve men and boys on the issue of violence against women requires an understanding of the complex nature and causes of men's violence. It's critical that men who want to do this work, as well as women who hope to engage men, develop this understanding.

Developing this understanding means familiarizing oneself with the feminist analyses of men's violence that has emerged from several decades of courageous work done by women in communities across Canada and around the world. These analyses focus on the power that men have traditionally assumed both in society as a whole and within individual relationships.

Developing this understanding also requires tapping into the research on men and masculinities over the past two-and-a-half decades, which has identified additional factors that contribute to men's violence (my short article, "The 7 P's of Men's Violence" explores these factors, see Additional Resources, page 64). This analysis, draws not only on a feminist analysis, but also on the negative impact on boys and men as they try to live up to the impossible ideals of manhood and men's power. It deals with the impact of violence (as witnesses to violence in the home or violence at the hands of other boys or men) on the lives of boys. It deals with the ways we have encouraged boys and men to suppress feelings and emotions.

Such an analysis is not to give excuses to men who use violence. It is not to equate men's experiences with the systematic oppression of women. It is, however to recognize the reality that men and boys have very real experiences of loss, fear, alienation and pain due to many factors, including, paradoxically the way they have learned to define and exercise social and individual power as men. Within a society in which men still have disproportionate power, these factors can be a tinderbox for the many-varied expressions of men's violence.

## The White Ribbon Campaign

In 1991, a handful of men in Canada decided we had a responsibility to urge all men to speak out against violence against women. We started the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) to encourage all men to look at our attitudes and behaviour and to challenge other men to stop all forms of violence against women. We adopted the white ribbon as a symbol of men's commitment to end the violence. The ribbon represents a personal pledge never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. It is a catalyst for discussion and a public challenge to men who might use violence against an intimate partner, another family member, or a stranger. It is our call to policy makers, opinion leaders, police, and judges to take seriously this national and international epidemic. And it is an act of love for the women in our lives.

In the past decade, we have moved from an idea organized out of a living room, to active campaigns in schools and communities across Canada. As of 2005, there are White Ribbon Campaigns or use of the white ribbon symbol in forty-eight countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Australia, and North America.

The White Ribbon Campaign brings men together from across the political, social and economic spectrum. Campaign participants disagree on many important issues of the day, but they must all agree on one point: that men must work together and as allies with women to end violence against women. We are united against intimate partner violence, against sexual harassment and against men's controlling behaviour in relationships. We are united in support of increased funding for women's programs, including women's shelters and rape crisis centres. We are united in support of equality among the sexes. We are united in supporting men playing a greater role as nurturers and caregivers. By building this unity, we can find ways to work together in a cooperative and positive environment.

In order to reach boys, the WRC produces posters and educational kits, which are being used with teenagers in three thousand middle schools and high schools across Canada and the United States. In order to reach men as workers and consumers, we have partnered with corporations and unions, which bring the ideas of the WRC to offices and shops.

We also work with women's organizations to respond to policy issues regarding violence against women. This work can include lobbying efforts, public demonstrations, press conferences and other media coverage.

The signature event of the White Ribbon Campaign in Canada centers on our annual White Ribbon Days running from November 25th, the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women, to December 6th, the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre in 1989 (when a man murdered 14 women university students). During that week, we encourage men (or men and women) to hold forums, distribute leaflets, and encourage events at schools, workplaces, and communities to increase awareness about the violence or to raise funds for efforts to end violence against women. (We encourage local groups who raise funds for the White Ribbon Campaign to keep half the funds they raise in their community by donating them to local women's programs.) Public service advertisements are broadcast on television and radio, and are printed in newspapers and magazines. Men and boys distribute white ribbons in schools, universities, places of worship, the workplace, shops and on the streets.



# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

We also respond year round to daily requests for information, ideas, and resources to end violence against women. We view women's organizations as experts on the issue of violence against women and look to them for leadership, especially with regard to legislative, judicial, and programmatic issues, even while, at the same time, we feel men have a distinct and unique contribution to make in educating and involving men and boys. Campaign members co-host events with women's organizations and raise funds for women's programs.

Knowing the link between men's absence from nurturing tasks and subsequent violence, we are taking initiatives to celebrate men as nurturers and caregivers. Through an annual DadWalk in Toronto and other cities, we encourage men to be active, involved, non-violent, and caring fathers. Research shows that children who do not have emotionally nurturing parenting are more likely to have difficulties regulating their own behaviour, which may lead to violent behaviour as adults. DadWalk supports a model of fatherhood that allows boys to have closer, more nurturing relationships with their fathers, and to become happier, more secure adults less capable of using violence against women, and gives a girl an experience of expecting nothing less than caring men in her life.

© Michael Kaufman, 2005.

*Michael Kaufman has worked as a writer, public speaker, consultant, and workshop leader on gender relations for numerous organizations, in particular, the United Nations. He is a founder of the White Ribbon Campaign, the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women.*

### MEN CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE BY:

- reinforcing the fact that every man is responsible for his own actions
- speaking out against all forms of violence
- offering positive support to other men
- adopting violence-free zones and attitudes at home, social gatherings and work
- using their strength to help keep women and children safe
- challenging the limitations of unhealthy masculine stereotypes
- being a positive role model for men, women and children
- organizing educational events about family violence
- volunteering to fundraise for a women's shelter
- reflecting on personal relationships to see if they engage in abusive behaviour
- supporting young men in developing healthy, nurturing relationships

All members of society are entitled to live safely and free of abuse. Awareness and education are key to enabling change for both male victims and abusers. Attitudes towards violence impact how individuals and communities respond to violence. Examining attitudes and reactions are key steps to seeking change and finding new ways to approach the unique needs of family violence issues from male perspectives.



## What You Can Do in Your Community

By Dr. Peter Jaffe

### FAMILY VIOLENCE IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS – ESPECIALLY BOYS AND MEN.

For the last 30 years, women in Canada have spoken out about violence in the family. They have held public forums, been involved in marching against violence and have established shelters for abused women and organized rape crisis centres for sexual assault victims. Men and boys have been relatively silent. Sure, a few good men and boys have helped support this movement but many more have said nothing or just argued that the problem wasn't that bad or that women were violent too.

Women can be violent and men can be abused, but one of the greatest challenges we face in society today is the level of violence and the acceptance of this violence as inevitable. Violence is often created by the way in which we socialize boys to accept violence and even see violence as a form of entertainment. For example, our national sport of hockey has to include fighting at the junior and professional level to fully entertain fans. It is interesting to note that Canadians can be Gold Medal winners at the Olympics without fighting when the rules clearly disallow this behaviour. The quality of hockey is equally entertaining.

It's time for a new generation of men and boys to challenge our long-standing silence on this issue. Men and boys can make a difference in eliminating family violence in a number of ways:

- challenge comments or “jokes” that are sexist and demeaning to women and girls
- learn more about school and community services that deal with family violence
- refuse to buy, rent or play video games that promote violence
- challenge movies or other forms of media that promote violence against girls and women
- volunteer with community and school violence prevention projects
- find teachable moments to discuss the issue of family violence and violence against women when younger men and boys raise the subject or ask questions about these issues
- role model respectful behaviour towards women and girls
- be active in fundraising activities that support agencies working to help victims of family violence
- get involved as a volunteer with counselling programs that help perpetrators of violence accept responsibility for their behaviour and learn new ways to interact with family members and others
- ensure that workplaces and schools have policies and programs to help individuals dealing with family violence, as well as bullying and harassment

*Dr. Peter Jaffe is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario, the Academic Director of the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women & Children, and Director Emeritus for the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System in London, Ontario.*



Help is available for perpetrators of violence seeking positive change. If you suspect someone you know is instigating family violence:

- listen without becoming judgemental
- help the individual seek help

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR BOYS AND MEN

Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access information on protecting youth in sports, husband abuse, men's treatment programs, fatherhood, dating violence and a variety of other resources, such as:

- Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men
- Directory of Services and Programs for Abused Men in Canada
- When Boys Have Been Sexually Abused: A Guide for Young Boys
- Intimate Partner Abuse Against Men – Overview Paper
- Abuse in Gay Male Relationships: A Discussion Paper
- Domestic Violence Treatment Effectiveness Study

Visit the website of Michael Kaufman (author of *Men and Boys can Play a Critical Role in Ending Violence against Women*) at [www.michaelkaufman.com](http://www.michaelkaufman.com) for free access to a book and a range of downloadable articles, including:

- "The 7 P's of Men's Violence."
- *Cracking the Armour: Power, Pain and the Lives of Men*
- "The AIM Framework: Addressing and Involving Men and Boys to Promote Gender Equality and End Gender Discrimination and Violence."

Educational materials are available through The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC). Contact: 365 Bloor St. East, Suite 201, Toronto, Canada M4W 3L4, 416-920-6684.

Visit [www.whiteribbon.com](http://www.whiteribbon.com) to access materials such as:

- Education and Action Kit: updated for use in 2005
- Strength posters: posters with images of boys and men speaking out against violence, as well as a set featuring First Nation's individuals, with text in four languages

Books by William S. Pollack, PhD:

- *Real Boys, Real Boys' Voices*
- *Real Boys Workbook*

Publications by Dr. Peter Jaffee and the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System:

- [www.lfcc.on.ca](http://www.lfcc.on.ca)
- Child Custody and Domestic Violence: [www.lfcc.on.ca/CCFJS\\_books.html](http://www.lfcc.on.ca/CCFJS_books.html)
- Theory-derived Explanations for Male Violence Against Female Partners: [www.lfcc.on.ca/CCFJS\\_researchreports.html](http://www.lfcc.on.ca/CCFJS_researchreports.html)

# Seniors

IT'S *your* BUSINESS



Many women and men find themselves vulnerable to abuse as they become older. This abuse is defined as any action or inaction that jeopardizes the older person's health or well-being. It may include physical, emotional, psychological, financial, sexual or medication abuse, as well as passive or active neglect.

Victims include both males and females from every income level and culture, as well as people in both good and poor health.

Abusers may be family members, friends or caregivers. They are often close enough to have influence or control over the victim. Abusers often have mental health or addictions issues.

### Did You Know?

- In cases of family violence reported to the police forces that participate in the UCR2 Survey, adult children and spouses accounted for almost three-quarters (71 per cent) of those responsible for victimization of older adults.  
*Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2002 No. 85-224 (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2002): 28.*
- The aging of the population, combined with the shift away from institutional care for the aged, and changes in health and social services, suggest that abuse of older adults could increase in future, as the demands on family members to care for older relatives increases.  
*Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2002 No. 85-224 (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2002): 26*
- More than half (52 per cent) of the older women who were victims of family homicide were killed by their spouses, compared to one-quarter (25 per cent) of older men victims of family homicide. Older men victims were twice as likely as older women victims to be killed by their adult sons (42 per cent vs. 24 per cent).  
*Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2002 No. 85-224 (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2002): 30.*

The above statistics were excerpted from: Abuse Of Older Adults: A Fact Sheet From The Department Of Justice Canada, <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/fm/adultsfs.html>

## Community Response to Abused and Neglected Older Persons

The following principles are a guide for a community response to abused and neglected older persons, intended to help you formulate approaches and interventions. Best practices include awareness of your agency's protocols and policies, and consultation with co-workers and supervisors to achieve appropriate, effective responses.



### PRINCIPLES GUIDING INTERVENTIONS

#### 1. As with all adults, older persons have the right to:

- the basic requirements of life: food, clothing, shelter and social contact
- live without physical, emotional, financial, sexual and medical abuse and neglect
- be informed about their civil and legal rights and live free from violation of these rights
- participate in making decisions about themselves, to the full extent of their ability
- refuse assistance and intervention

#### 2. Situations involving suspected abuse and neglect must be assessed to determine the victim's preferences, level of risk and degree of intervention warranted.

#### 3. In suspected cases of abuse or neglect, intervention can only occur with the voluntary, informed consent of the victim, when and to whatever degree that person is able to participate. It should:

- be the least intrusive or restrictive
- aim to maximize the person's choices
- be based on the person's strengths and abilities for positive action
- respect the person's privacy

#### 4. Assault, theft, uttering threats, fraud and neglect are crimes. The police should be called to deal with alleged criminal activity.

Abuse and Neglect of an Older or Vulnerable Person: Adapted with permission from the British Columbia InterMinistry Committee on Elder Abuse, and Continuing Care Division, Ministry of Health, and Ministry Responsible for Seniors. (February 1992). *Principles, Procedures, and Protocols for Elder Abuse*, pp. 3-4.

#### IF YOU THINK A SENIOR IS BEING ABUSED:

- contact your local police, RCMP detachment or tribal police immediately when abuse involves theft, assault or other illegal actions
- you can also report abuse in a care facility through the Protection for Persons in Care Reporting Line (toll free) 1-888-357-9339
- contact the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters at (780) 456-7000 or toll free at 1-866-331-3933 or visit [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca) for the name and contact information of the nearest shelter or support services
- call the Seniors' Abuse Helpline: (780) 454-8888
- find out if your community offers:
  - subsidized counselling/support services through a local social service agency, such as Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)
  - alternative living accommodations
  - outreach services for elderly people
  - home care and homemaker services
  - support groups for family members caring for elderly relatives



### Suggestions for Families and Caregivers of an Older Adult

- When an aging parent or relative needs additional care, discuss the best way to meet these needs with the older person and family members. Consider how to handle the current or eventual transition from independence to dependence. Talk about medical care, financial matters, and practical matters relating to daily living.
- Carefully reflect on your own ability to provide care for an increasingly dependent relative. Are you and your family able to care for an aging parent or relative in your home on a short or long term basis?
- Ask your family members how they feel about caring for an aging parent or older relative. Think about how the care giving will affect your spouse and children.
- Consider the physical realities of the home into which the older adult may move. Does it have awkward steps or stairs? Does the bathtub and shower have safety rails? Will there be a private bedroom? Will the older adult be able to easily and independently get to public places, such as a library, church, shopping mall, restaurant, park, barbershop or hair salon?
- Learn about community resources available to older persons and the family. Take advantage of all that fit your needs and interests.
- Remember all relationships require individual time as well as time together. Transitions often involve feelings of loss and grief. Respect each other's privacy.
- Maintain a sense of humour!
- Ask for support.



## Suggestions for Older Persons

- Plan your own future when you are well, healthy and independent.
- Do not deed or will your house or other assets to someone in return for promises to keep you out of a nursing home or take care of you at home if you become disabled.
- Make a will and review it annually. Do not revise your will without careful consideration or speaking to someone you trust who is not affected by your decisions.
- Do not give up control of your property or assets until you feel unable to manage them any longer. If you feel you need to do this, personally consult a lawyer to get information on how to do this in a way that protects your assets.
- Ensure pension and other cheques are deposited directly into your own bank account.
- Make your home burglar-proof. Do not leave cash, jewellery or prized possessions in view. Use a safety deposit box to store valuables.
- Maintain an active social life through clubs, your local seniors' centre, your church and community or cultural groups. Develop friends of all ages.
- Stay active in the community as long as possible.
- If an adult child wants to return home to live, thoughtfully consider the request, evaluating possible situations that could arise. Think about any conditions you would set, such as duration of the stay, sharing responsibilities and financial expectations. Discuss these conditions with your adult child before agreeing.
- Ask for help if the need arises. We all need support at different times!

## What You Can Do in Your Community

- contact your local seniors' centres and find out what social and support services exist for seniors
- create an easy to read information sheet with phone numbers of interest to seniors
- volunteer with shut-in seniors
- start a mentoring program between seniors and young people
- ask your library to start a "library on wheels" for older people who find it hard to get out
- ask the local health clinic to provide information on abuse of older adults in waiting and examining rooms



# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SENIORS

Many resources are available only through the Internet. If you don't have access to a computer or have an email account, your local librarian can help you. Most libraries in Alberta have computers and Internet available for free public use. It is easy to set up a free email account.

Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access information on the Elder Abuse Awareness Network, what you can do about family violence, and other available assistance.

### You can also access information by contacting:

- The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters: (780) 456-7000 or toll free 1-866-331-3933, [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca)
- Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired: (780) 423-5510 or email: [info@srsr-seniors.com](mailto:info@srsr-seniors.com)
- Seniors' Abuse Helpline: (780) 454-8888
- visit Alberta Seniors and Community Supports at [www.seniors.gov.ab.ca](http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca) or call 1-800-642-3853 toll free to access information on provincial government programs and services, such as financial support and health benefits for Alberta's seniors
- call the Alberta Health and Wellness Health Link at 1-866-408-5456 (Link) for 24-hour assistance and health information
- visit the Alberta Council on Aging (ACA) [www.seniorfriendly.ca](http://www.seniorfriendly.ca) or contact [acaging@interbaun.com](mailto:acaging@interbaun.com) to reach Alberta's only provincial non-government umbrella organization representing seniors

### REMEMBER

- you have the right to privacy and confidentiality
- you have the right to refuse help

## Prevalence of Abuse

- 18 percent of 800 Albertans surveyed stated they knew a senior who experienced abuse. (*2003 Omnibus Survey, Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Network*)
- Since 1998, more than 4,000 allegations of abuse and neglect have been reported under the Alberta *Protection for Persons in Care Act (PPCA)* – the majority of allegations involving abuse of seniors in long-term care facilities. (*Quarterly PPCA Reports, Alberta Community Development*)

The above statistics are excerpted from: *A Comprehensive Co-ordinated Response to Elder Abuse, A Brief Submitted to The Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying*, prepared by The Action Group on Elder Abuse.

# Aboriginal Communities

IT'S *your* BUSINESS



Family violence affects each person in our community, directly or indirectly. It cripples us. As long as people suffer from family violence, either as victims or perpetrators, we cannot be strong. As we each walk the path of healing, we must commit to non-violent ways of being and living with each other. Our healing begins from within.

*Healing begins from within you  
then flows outward  
to your family,  
your community,  
your nation.*

## The Path to Healing... Begins with You

### ARE YOU HURTING BECAUSE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE?

- Have you been hit, bitten, choked, burned, shaken or had your hair pulled?
- Have you been starved, ignored, criticized, called names or threatened?
- Has anyone forced you to have sex or touched your private parts when you did not want them to?
- Has anyone threatened to destroy or actually destroyed your things or hurt your pets?

### Does the abuse make you feel:

- sad?
- angry?
- helpless?
- afraid?
- guilty?
- worthless?
- sick?
- alone?

### FAMILY VIOLENCE IS WRONG.

The pain of family violence can control you in many ways. Do you try to escape or forget your pain by hurting others, drinking alcohol or taking drugs?

**If you are hurting inside or if you are hurting someone else, talk to someone you trust. Abuse can happen to anyone:**

- babies
- girls and boys
- teens
- women
- men
- older people

***Remember, if you have been abused, it's not your fault. The pain must come out to heal.***

### GO FOR HELP!

- If you are being abused, get help right now.
- If you have painful memories of abuse, it's okay to talk about it. Reach out for help.
- There are people in your community who understand and care. Let them help you restore the harmony of mind, body, spirit and emotion through healing.



**Abuse hurts.  
It's a heavy  
pain to carry  
alone.**

**Healing is  
possible for  
everyone.**

**Remember,  
if you have  
been abused,  
it's not your fault.**



### TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST

- Healing is a personal journey, but a caring person can help you work through your pain.
- Destructive behaviours can be changed.
- Begin your own healing process by exploring your history.
- Participate in healing activities or cultural events.

**If there is violence in your life, remember there are people who care and are ready to listen. It may be a:**

- friend, immediate family member or extended family member
- community leader or elder
- community health worker, public health nurse or doctor
- social worker
- counsellor or teacher

Abuse makes many people uncomfortable. If the person you talk to cannot help, do not give up. Talk to someone else.

***Nobody deserves to be abused.***

***Check your local phone book for emergency service numbers or ask the operator for assistance connecting with your local Child and Family Services Authority\*, the police, RCMP or tribal police.***

***If a child is being abused, call the 24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-387-KIDS (5437)***

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\* A listing of Alberta's Child and Family Services Authorities can be found on page 112 of this guide.



### **A Message From The Alberta Aboriginal Advisory Committee**

Our First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are dealing with many challenges: sustainable economic development; meaningful education and employment; preserving culture, traditions, language and spirituality; and addressing addictions, suicide and family violence.

Our elders are holders of the healing traditions. Understanding our past and respecting our culture helps us to move forward as individuals, families and communities.

We all know someone who is hurting. We see children without parents and grandparents, we see young people with no hope, and we see women and men not knowing how to guide their families.

We must each commit to our own healing and commit to support others in theirs. Our communities will be strong when the women and men in our communities are strong.

We can create a future for ourselves and our children that is free of violence by supporting those who are victimized by family violence and supporting those who perpetrate it. Our elders and our traditions will support us in our journey.

For more information about the Alberta Aboriginal Advisory Committee, please contact the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Division of Alberta Children's Services at (780) 422-5916 or toll free at 310-0000.

*Hurting words  
scar for life  
Hands are not  
for hitting*

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### The Safety Plan Wheel

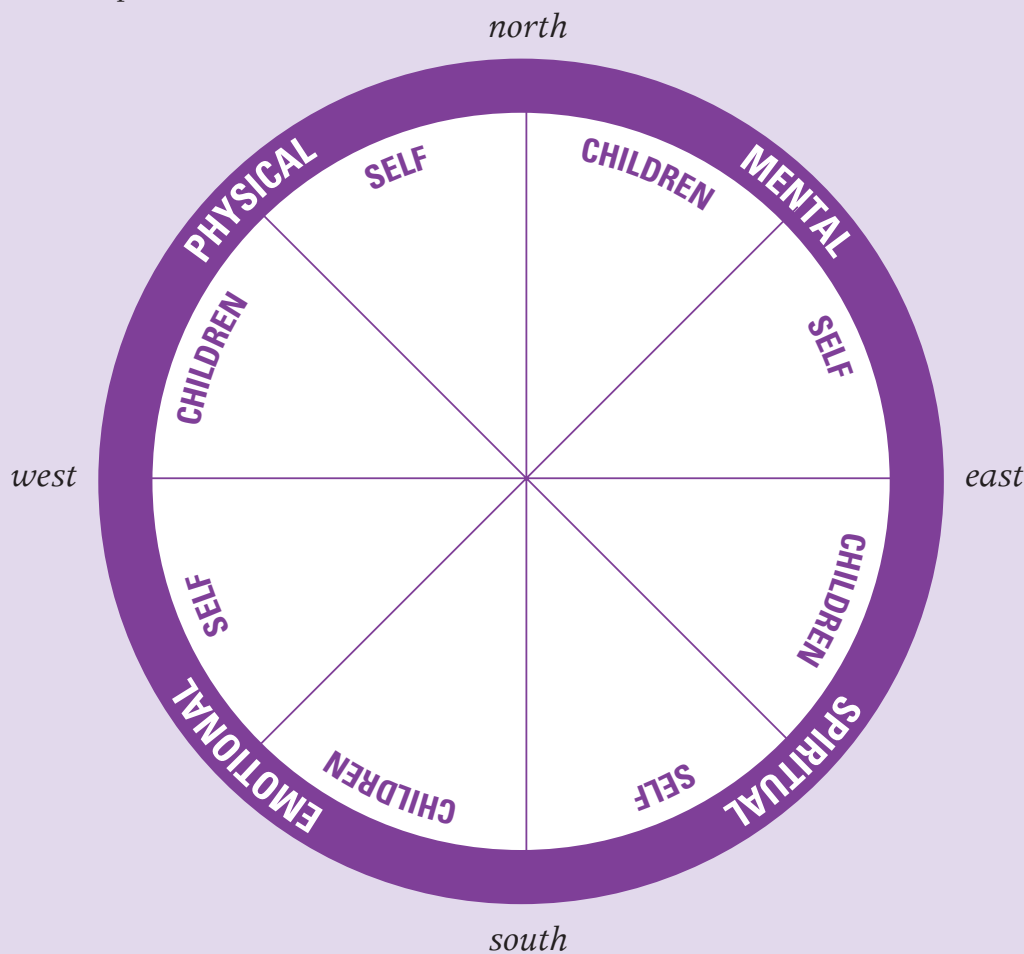
By Sue Languedoc, Aboriginal Consulting Services, Edmonton

The Safety Plan Wheel is based on the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, which is grounded in the belief that we all have mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects within ourselves. These aspects assist us to grow and move forward, much like a bicycle wheel that is balanced and well cared for. Safety does not just focus on the physical aspect of one's self, but encompasses all parts of us that need to be nurtured and respected. The Safety Plan Wheel is used by both the men and women's teaching circles, within the circle of safety family violence programs. It is also used in individual counselling sessions where safety is an issue.

Thoughtfully used, the wheel assists women and men in identifying specific activities, thoughts and behaviours that are aimed at safety but also incorporate the needs of their children. This allows the man or woman to look beyond their own circumstances and reminds them they have a responsibility to ensure they incorporate action-orientated activities aimed at keeping their child safe.

The wheel can continue to be used in teaching circles as women and men increase their knowledge about safety from a family violence perspective.

Use the Safety Planning Wheel below to help you define your feelings, thoughts and spiritual impressions, as well as the physical effects you and your children will realize with each possible choice for action.



## Sharing Stories as an Act of Healing

Some women have not, to their knowledge, known anyone who was abused. The abused woman is often silent. Her shame, self-blame, loss of self-esteem and fear all work together to make her feel very alone.

Other women and girls may know many who have experienced abuse. The question for those who are abused may not be “if” but “when”. They may not have role models to help them envision a different future for themselves.

Sharing stories of healing are powerful motivators. The courage, determination and heart that are part of healing stories help us get closer to those qualities in ourselves. They help us find our own path.

This story of healing is one such story. There are many such stories, each uniquely different, alive in the hearts of the people in our community. We need only reach out.

### ONE WOMAN'S STORY OF HEALING

*This success story was provided by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters in the spirit of celebrating a young woman's healing journey.*

This client was referred to Discovery House through the Wellness Centre at Forest Lawn High School where I meet with students who either have past experiences, or are currently experiencing some type of abuse, either familial or in a relationship. At the time, she was a seventeen-year-old, grade twelve student who had little direction where the future might lead her. She was in an abusive relationship and had been hospitalized, the result of a severe beating that left her with head trauma and memory loss.

Her mother died when she was very young, leaving her father and brothers to abuse her, on a regular basis, until she left home at the age of twelve to fend for herself. She took with her years of internalized anger and the belief that it's normal for men to abuse women, something she felt was common in her Métis culture.

Attending counselling on a regular basis helped this client to deal with her anger positively and effectively, to understand that abuse is wrong, and to gain the courage and strength necessary to criminally charge her abuser. Referrals to Calgary Legal Guidance and the Calgary Police Service's Domestic Conflict Unit were reportedly helpful. With advice from these agencies and support and guidance from myself, this client was empowered to hold her abuser accountable for his actions.

She successfully testified against him in court where he was found guilty of “assault causing bodily harm” and “damage to property” charges. He received a peace bond, was sentenced to eighteen months probation and ordered to pay restitution for the damage to her property. He was ordered to attend domestic violence and addictions counselling.

Now a strong, twenty-year-old, our client has given a college presentation on wife abuse, which earned her an A grade. She is currently registered in the four-year Applied Justice Studies degree program at Mount Royal College and has been in a healthy relationship for the past seven months.



### What You Can Do in Your Community

- become familiar with print, video and DVD resources about family violence that specifically pertain to Aboriginal culture
- learn about the history of Aboriginal people and take pride in the strengths of your ancestors
- locate support services in your community that are skilled in working with Aboriginal people
- celebrate National Aboriginal Awareness Day on June 21
- provide staff and volunteers in your organization with professional development sessions on working effectively with Aboriginal people

*Hands Are Not for Hitting* and *Words Are Not for Hurting* are two activities championed by the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters to help teach children to explore non-violent alternatives to fighting. Please go to page 24 for guidelines on how to best use these resources.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access information on family violence awareness and prevention, the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, and the challenges and potential for Aboriginals dealing with abuse, neglect and interpersonal violence. Follow the links to the Resources page to access specific Aboriginal/Métis Resources. You will find a list of resource materials created by, or in collaboration with, Aboriginal persons.

The Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters and Alberta Children’s Services has compiled this list in respect of the right to self-representation. Intended to aid cultural sensitivity education and help incorporate Aboriginal cultural content into shelter libraries, this living document only includes suggestions from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and individuals living in Alberta.

The Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters and Alberta Children’s Services are pleased to share this document with all service providers and gratefully welcome ongoing suggestions.

# Ethno Cultural Communities

IT'S *your* BUSINESS



Members of ethno cultural communities face particular challenges when dealing with family violence. Those outside the community may wrongly assume those within are homogenous, with everyone sharing identical values. It is also often wrongly assumed family violence is acceptable or tolerated, and that women and girls are accustomed to or accepting of “second class” treatment.

Newcomers to Canada face transitions that can be overwhelming. Changes may be associated with language, climate, food, employment, law, social status and intergenerational conflict.

Like everyone, members of ethno cultural communities want strong family ties, supportive communities and freedom from violence. They desire preservation of culture as well as the opportunity to be active community participants.



## Cultural Competency Tools for Service Providers

The Cultural Diversity Institute (CDI) links people and organizations that value diversity. Located at the University of Calgary, CDI helps organizations remove systemic barriers and create working environments that capitalize on the many benefits of cultural diversity. The results are greater levels of inclusivity, well-being and equity.

CDI's 80-page guide, *Cultural Competency: A Self-Assessment Guide for Human Service Organizations* helps human service organizations understand cultural competency and reflect on their structures, policies and procedures. It suggests methods to plan and implement culturally competent practices.

### THE SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE:

- Discusses significant changes in Canadian demography, government legislation, socio-economic reality of culturally diverse people in Canada and benefits associated with cultural competency in human services;
- Proposes a model of culturally competent organizations and the process towards cultural competency for human service organizations;
- Presents a series of nine tools that examine specific organizational functions with respect to cultural competency, including governance, administration and management, policy development, program development and service delivery;
- Suggests a guideline for funding assessment to facilitate cultural competency in new programs/projects;
- Provides a list of resources relating to cultural diversity and competency. Contact CDI at [www.ucalgary.ca/cdi](http://www.ucalgary.ca/cdi) for more information on this guide.

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### What You Can Do in Your Community

- use your cultural traditions and sacred practices to create and support healthy families
- encourage community leaders to promote prevention of family violence
- translate family violence materials into your language
- ask community radio and television producers to address family violence
- encourage youth and older adults to develop healthy relationships by hosting non-threatening activities such as cooking and eating together
- reduce barriers to communication and stereotyping by sharing your culture with others

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ETHNO CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access information on cultural sensitivities, language barriers, risk of deportation and a variety of other resources, such as:

- Images of Women in Spiritual Traditions: Role Models for Global Understanding
- Abuse is Not Love (English as an Additional Language)
- Violence against women: meeting the cross cultural challenge
- Assisting Immigrant and Refugee Women Abused by Their Sponsors: a guide for service providers

### RESOURCES ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES:

The Multicultural Health Brokers' Co-op in Edmonton has translated some family violence materials. As advocates for community development and health promotion, the Multicultural Health Brokers provide consultation and support to other service providers on cross-cultural issues. They serve as health brokers between health institutions and immigrant families, as well as provide direct support to individuals and families. Their services include health education, parenting support, sexuality education, prenatal education, post-natal support and translation. Please contact [yvonnechiu@shaw.ca](mailto:yvonnechiu@shaw.ca) or [mchb@interbaun.com](mailto:mchb@interbaun.com) for more information.

Culturally sensitive family violence prevention services are available through the Edmonton Chinese Community by calling 1-780-919-8527. Brochures in Chinese address:

- healthy and abusive relationships
- helping someone who is abused
- myths and facts about family violence
- immigration laws in relation to abused immigrant and refugee women
- reporting family violence to the police
- family violence – court process
- elder abuse

# Faith Communities

IT'S *your* BUSINESS



Like all groups of people, members of faith communities can also experience violence and abuse. Faith communities are challenged to provide leadership and offer comfort, spiritual guidance and healing to both victims and perpetrators of family violence. The community's role includes offering support to help perpetrators take responsibility for their actions.

Faith communities must take all disclosures of abuse seriously and work together to ensure victim safety. The wonderful diversity of sacred traditions, practices and wisdom in Alberta's faith communities offers many opportunities to prevent family violence and support healing.

## Message from FaithLink

### FRIENDS,

As religious leaders we represent a wonderful diversity of sacred traditions and practices. Yet, we all have one thing in common: at least three out of ten women and children that gather with us for worship or other communal activities are victims of family violence or bullying. Often those who have initiated the violence (and are also trapped in the painful cycles of their own abuse) are there beside them. This cancerous presence of abuse eats away at the very heart of our communities shredding the connective tissues of hope, trust and mutual care. Unchecked, it passes from generation to generation and subverts the very spiritual health of our corporate life.

My experience in the field of family violence treatment and prevention over the last 15 years has filled me with great hope. Lives are being changed, perpetrators are being healed and justice systems are moving beyond punitive models to new approaches that truly change behaviours. Religious and secular resources are combining to provide spiritually sensitive and professionally grounded treatment within partnerships of mutual support. Above all, experience and research has shown that you as a religious leader along with your community can play a pivotal role in preventing abuse and providing critical counsel and support when abuse occurs.

I know there are many things competing for top spot on your priority list but the human and financial costs of not stopping violence where it starts is unacceptable. This community resource guide highlights resources and gives you ideas you can implement within your communities.

The work of our Calgary based FaithLink program has demonstrated that when religious/spiritual communities work with professional service providers, bullying and abuse, and human devastation, can be significantly reduced.

I remember a fourteen years young girl who faced down her demonically cruel father in court. He had beaten, deprived and confined her and her four-year-old brother over a long period of time. When asked why she was willing to take this incredible risk she said, "So my brother would have a chance to be a child."

Let's take courage with her. Become engaged in the campaign to turn off the violence. Begin the positive work of building memorable childhoods, healthy families and a peace filled society.

Sincerely,

The Very Rev. Robert T. Pynn



### What You Can Do in Your Community

- ask your faith leader to introduce the subject of family violence in teachings
- develop an outreach committee to raise ongoing donations to help support a women's shelter
- invite someone from a shelter to speak about family violence and support services
- post family violence and local support service information in meeting rooms, washrooms, and other appropriate areas
- donate books on family violence to your library

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access information including questions for a faith leader or friend to ask someone in crisis, creative ways churches and their leaders might respond more effectively to family violence and a variety of other resources, such as:

- Turn Off the Violence 2004 Resource Manual for Faith Communities
- Family Violence Occurs in Your Faith Community brochure
- Resources for a Congregation fact sheet
- Religion and Violence Research Team

FaithLink is a collaboration of spiritual/religious communities and service providers working together to prevent domestic violence and to provide healing and hope to all those affected by it.

Contact information:

#300, 906 - 8th Ave. SW

Calgary, AB T2P 1H9

Ph: (403) 217-2159

E-mail: [imsevcik@telus.net](mailto:imsevcik@telus.net)



# Medical Community

IT'S *your* BUSINESS



Domestic violence is a health care issue. Research indicates those affected by family violence often seek help from the health care system. Health care providers are frequently the first or only professionals with whom they have contact. It is critical for all segments of the health care system to respond appropriately and consistently.

The health care system includes, but is not limited to, ambulance services, hospitals, clinics, private practitioners, public health, home care and rehabilitation services. Research consistently indicates a majority of health care providers fail to identify victims of domestic violence. Providers often treat physical injuries without inquiring about the cause. They may not be comfortable asking about domestic violence and victims rarely volunteer such information.

Identifying and responding to abuse can make a difference. Routine inquiry and effective use of screening tools is a primary starting point for improving medical response. Health care providers should work closely with domestic violence service providers, advise victims of the availability of residential and non-residential services and provide assistance if they would like to connect with those services.

Health care providers should document victim's statements, injuries, symptoms, treatments and referrals, as well as arrange for collection of appropriate evidence. Documentation and photographs are very important for legal proceedings.

Safety planning should be integrated into a victim's treatment plan to reduce the risk of further harm from the abusive partner. Health care providers should ensure family violence education is part of their own ongoing professional development.

# IT'S *your* BUSINESS

## AS A SERVICE PROVIDER

- ask individuals about family violence without their partner or other family members present
- discuss the possibility of family violence during case conferences
- display information about family violence prominently in your office
- listen patiently to those involved in family violence
- recognize that abused persons are experts about their own circumstances
- become listed as a resource for survivors and/or abusers in your local service directory and on the Internet
- organize an inter-agency committee to address family violence in your community
- ask firefighters, paramedics and emergency room staff to watch for signs of family violence and take action
- work with health centres and clinics to educate parents and support programs that address healthy child development and parenting



**Violence –  
One of the  
World's Biggest  
Health Concerns**

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### Millions Killed and Millions More Injured by Violence Annually

By Karen Birchard

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#### GENEVA

More than 1.6 million people are killed violently each year, according to the World Health Organization's (WHO) first comprehensive global report on the relationship between violence and health.

Millions of people are also left injured as a result of violence and suffer from physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health problems, according to the report. Public health experts said these statistics are the tip of the iceberg because the majority of violent acts are committed behind closed doors and go unreported.

The report said violence is one of the leading public health issues of our time. Violence is among the leading causes of death for people ages 15 to 44 years of age, accounting for 14 per cent of deaths among males and seven per cent of deaths among females.

On an average day, 1,424 people are killed in acts of homicide – almost one person every minute, the report said. Roughly one person commits suicide every 40 seconds. About 35 people are killed every hour as a direct result of armed conflict.

In the 20th century, an estimated 191 million people lost their lives directly or indirectly as a result of conflict, and well over half were civilians. Studies have shown that in some countries, health-care expenditures due to violence account for up to five per cent of GDP.

"There is nothing inevitable about violence, nor is it an intrinsic part of the human condition," said Dr. Etienne Krug, director of WHO's department of injuries and violence prevention. "Evidence from around the world suggests violence can be prevented by a variety of measures aimed at individuals, families and communities," he added.

As well as violence such as war or conflict, the report examines frequently overlooked issues such as youth violence, child abuse, elderly abuse, partner violence, sexual violence and self-inflicted violence or suicides.

Canadian Inuit have a high incidence of suicide, with overall suicide rates of between 60 and 75 per 100,000 people, compared with 15 per 100,000 for the country's general population, according to figures in the report.

Violence has a huge impact on health care. The report said that for every person killed by violence as many as another 40 need treatment for serious injuries.

"The report challenges us in many respects," said Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, director-general of WHO.

"It forces us to reach beyond our notions of what is acceptable and comfortable, to challenge notions that acts of violence are simply matters of family privacy, individual choice or inevitable facets of life."

## Joint Statement on Family Violence

*By the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta and Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta.*

© Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, December 1999:  
[http://nurses.ab.ca/Archived%20%20Pages/Family\\_violence.htm](http://nurses.ab.ca/Archived%20%20Pages/Family_violence.htm)

The Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta, and the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta cooperatively developed this joint statement. These professionals recognize family violence is a major public health concern and believe nurses<sup>5</sup> have a significant role in addressing family violence.

### DEFINING FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is assault by one family member against another. It is about power, manipulation and control of one person over another.

Family violence can involve:

- a child
- a spouse or an intimate partner (regardless of age)
- an elderly person
- physical, psychological or sexual assault
- exploitation, neglect, intimidation or inappropriate treatment

Abuse occurs among all types of intimate relationships. Family violence crosses social, racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, socioeconomic and educational boundaries. The most prevalent report of abuse is that committed by men against women. Because of this prevalence, all women regardless of age, should be screened for abuse. It is well documented in literature that pregnancy increases the likelihood of abuse.

Men are also affected by partner abuse. There is an underreporting of abuse of men and the elderly. Elderly men and women may be subject to abuse as they assume a dependent position that requires care giving.

The abuse of older persons has only recently become a focus. Researchers estimate that annually, four per cent of the elderly and disabled population are abused, neglected or exploited. Abuse of older adults includes the additional acts of neglect and financial or material exploitation during the act of providing care for the dependent adult. Neglect is the most prevalent reported type of abuse of older adults<sup>6</sup>.

### STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The position of the three professional nursing groups is “zero tolerance for family violence”. Violence is never acceptable and should never be tolerated. The nursing profession has a professional and social responsibility to address this issue. Individuals have a right to a safe environment.

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<sup>5</sup> In this document, “nurse” refers to registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or registered psychiatric nurse.

<sup>6</sup> Additional information on elder abuse can be found on pages 65-70 of this guide.

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

Nurses are in a strategic position to address the issue of violence in families because we are often the first professionals to interact with the victims of family violence. Nurses are seen by the public as accessible and non-threatening, which allows them to initiate therapeutic relationships built on trust.

Nurses need to be aware of the important role they play in prevention, identification, intervention and rehabilitation of families and individuals who have been exposed to or suffered from family violence. If we don't provide effective help, then we are permitting a chronic and potentially fatal problem to exist. Early intervention is the key to stopping later acts of violence. All nurses need education in their basic programs and continuing education in order to identify and address the issues and care related to family violence.

### PRACTICE SETTING RESPONSIBILITIES

Nurses in every practice environment should assess clients for family violence. In particular, attention should be paid to clients in emergency departments and prenatal care services. Very often, the first place an abused client enters the health care system is the emergency department or women's health services.

Effective policies and protocols to address zero tolerance for family violence must be developed and used in every practice setting. Documentation tools such as body maps and assessment forms are two resources to be used to record incidents. Community resources for addressing needs related to family violence should be identified and available for use by all health care professionals in every practice setting.

**About 40 per cent of cases of violence against women are revealed when a pregnant woman sees a doctor.**



## What You Can Do in the Community

Nurses in every practice environment have the responsibility to:

- examine one's own beliefs, attitudes and values towards family violence, thus enabling more effective intervention
- use open-ended questions in a non-judgmental, non-threatening manner
- ask patients about current or past abuse, making routine abuse screening a standard assessment component
- complete detailed documentation, as an essential aspect of patient care which may also be helpful in any legal proceedings
- assist the victim with developing a safety plan and connections with community resources, shelter information and support groups
- inform victims that assault is a criminal offence
- provide education about family violence
- collaborate with other health care professionals



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY

Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) to access information on a variety of resources, such as:

- A Handbook for Health and Social Service Providers and Educators on Children Exposed to Woman Abuse/Family Violence (1999)
- Cover Story: Violence Against Women
- MDs can Screen for and Prevent Domestic Abuse: Physicians in a Unique Position, Recognized by New Program at Queen's
- Alberta Association of Registered Nurses
- College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta
- Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta
- Canadian Medical Association: [www.cma.ca/index.cfm/ci\\_id/121/la\\_id/1.htm](http://www.cma.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/121/la_id/1.htm)

# Mobilizing Your Community

IT'S *your* BUSINESS



# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### **Community Action Plan**

It is helpful to think of community engagement as a continuum of ongoing activities that focus on seeking active participation from community members.

#### **STEPS TO DEVELOPING A PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN**

##### **Step 1 – Set the Stage**

Every community member has a role to play and can be part of a positive solution. Think about your community and how the issue of family violence affects you, your friends and neighbours.

##### **Step 2 – Gather Stakeholders**

Become part of or create a coordinating committee, inter-agency group or citizen action/advocacy group to talk about how prevalent family violence is in your community and what can be done about it.

##### **Step 3 – Scan Community Services**

Think about all the people who are involved in family violence.

- Who currently provides services in your community?
- What are the resources/programs and strategies?
- What's missing?
- What do you need to do?

##### **Step 4 – Identify Community Strategies**

Define needs and develop an action plan which identifies strategies to build a stronger community. Set priorities for action, identify timelines and key people responsible for each action so that everyone becomes part of the solution.

##### **Step 5 – Oversee Implementation of Strategies**

Get started! Small working groups may further develop specific strategies while the original larger group may serve as advisory support.

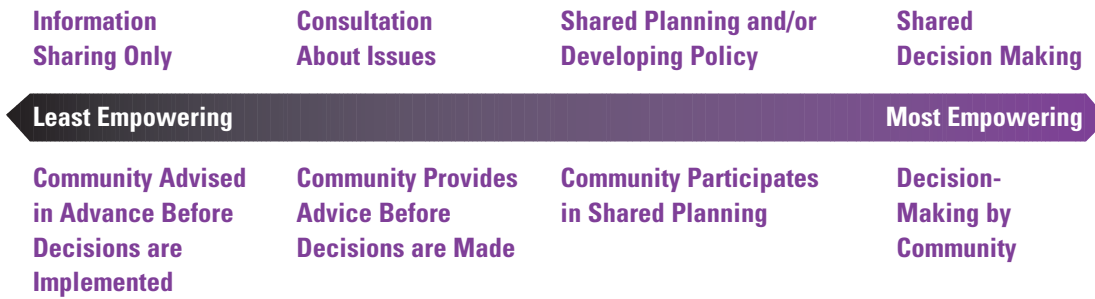
##### **Step 6 – Evaluate and Review**

Reconvene to discuss progress in the community. What is working well? What needs to be changed? What new ideas or strategies might be added to the action plan? Remember to celebrate your success!

Visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB) and click on Community Incentive Fund, to access the *Co-ordinated Community Action Plan to Address Family Violence* Modules and other detailed information on supporting communities through the engagement process.

The continuum below may serve as a tool to assist you in understanding the value of community engagement in empowering people to become part of the solution.

## CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



**Where in the Continuum of Community Involvement Do You Want to Finish?**

## REFERENCE

*Community Engagement – A Strategic Framework and Guide*, prepared by the Assembly Committee on Community Engagement March 2005, Alberta Children’s Services.

## Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Incentive Fund

The Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Incentive Fund was developed in response to the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying. This initiative provides funding for communities to develop projects that best meet their needs in a collaborative community response. The Community Incentive Fund provided grants to 130 projects in 62 communities. Projects including education and awareness, community action plans, intervention strategies and family support programs are just a few of the initiatives currently underway throughout Alberta.

For more information about the Community Incentive Fund visit [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB)

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE



### Creating a Bully-Free Alberta!

A new team of bully-proofing champions leapt into action on June 7, 2005 to help kids in Alberta protect themselves and others from bullying. Dakota, Tina, Kiara, Michael and Eric – the S-Team Heroes are part of a new Alberta government initiative to help children make positive, empowering choices when confronted by a bully.

The S-Team Heroes were designed to help kids three to 11 years old build their personal esteem and find their hero within. The S-Team Heroes website [www.teamheroes.ca](http://www.teamheroes.ca) contains an online game as its focal point.

In addition to the S-Team Heroes game, the Alberta government has developed a series of posters and fact sheets, as well as a comic book based on the game, for communities with limited Internet access. More than 6,000 key community partners including schools, libraries, Child and Family Services Authorities, Parent Link Centres and sports associations received a starter kit of materials to help put a stop to bullying.

Parents also have a responsibility to learn about bullying. [Bullyfreealberta.ca](http://Bullyfreealberta.ca) was created to help parents learn how to help if their child is a victim of bullying, a witness to a bullying situation, or the one being the bully. Parents, professionals and community agencies can also visit [www.bullyfreealberta.ca](http://www.bullyfreealberta.ca) to order the S-Team Heroes campaign materials free-of-charge.

The S-Team Heroes and [bullyfreealberta.ca](http://bullyfreealberta.ca) are part of the first phase of a three-year education and awareness campaign designed to prevent bullying in Alberta. The campaign is a key priority under the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative (ACYI)<sup>7</sup>, and follows through on commitments made during the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying.

#### TIPS FOR KIDS EXPERIENCING BULLYING:

- Look the bully straight in the eye and say “stop.” Walk away immediately if the bully still teases you. A person who bullies wants to see you scared. If you do not react, the bully may get bored and stop.
- Physically fighting back is not a useful choice because you could get hurt or blamed for starting trouble. Using violence to stop violence is wrong and makes a bad situation worse or more dangerous.
- Tell your parents and someone at school you trust, like a teacher or principal. Don't give up if the first adult you tell does not help. Tell other adults until you get the help you need. Bullying is wrong and you do not have to put up with it. When adults know about bullying, they can help you make it stop.
- A victim's silence enables many bullies to be able to repeat their behaviour without consequences. Don't be embarrassed to ask for help. It takes real courage to speak out. Your strength in reporting bullying also helps others because bullying behaviour is rarely limited to one person.



<sup>7</sup> The ACYI is a collaborative partnership of government ministries working together to ensure children and youth are supported in reaching their potential.



## TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Teach your child safety strategies and practice ways to tell bullies to stop without escalating aggression.
- Contact the school to make sure the situation will be monitored. Ask for advice about contacting the parents of the bully and the parents of other victims. Work with the school to make sure there is a plan to deal with bullying. Check with your child to see if it is working.
- Children who bully tend to pick on children who are isolated. Tell your child to play smart by being part of a group in circumstances where bullying could happen.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about his or her feelings and ideas. Offer positive feedback when a child has the courage to tell you and other adults about bullying. Staying silent because of fear of retaliation makes the situation worse. Let your child know bullying is not his or her fault. We need to ensure our children know they do not need to live in fear and that taking a stand by telling others is the first step to eliminating bullying behaviour.
- Visit [www.bullyfreealberta.ca](http://www.bullyfreealberta.ca) or [www.teamheroes.ca](http://www.teamheroes.ca) for additional tips and information.



## What You Can Do in Your Community

### AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- ask your schools and the Canadian Red Cross to provide education about dating violence and all other forms of abuse
- become a Canadian Red Cross RespectEd Violence Prevention Volunteer Educator. Visit [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca) for more information
- ask schools to ensure that students know about family violence resources on the Internet
- encourage day-care centres and schools to help children learn non-violent ways of dealing with conflict
- offer to help your local women's shelter as a volunteer, board member or fundraiser
- after seeking permission, put tear-off sheets with local resource names and numbers inside cubicles in hospital, hotel, restaurant and movie theatre washrooms, as well as on community bulletin boards
- organize training sessions on family violence for other colleagues in your community
- work with local churches and faith communities to provide information about family violence
- ask barber shops and beauty salons to display family violence information in "eye friendly" locations
- alert local animal shelters about the relationship between abuse of animals and family violence
- ask your local public library to carry periodicals and books on the topic of family violence
- encourage your neighbourhood, co-op or school to adopt a violence-free policy

### WHAT YOU CAN DO DURING FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION MONTH

- encourage your town or city council to formally proclaim Family Violence Prevention Month
- involve your Chamber of Commerce in encouraging all businesses on one street or area of town to display family violence prevention material for one week in November
- encourage community leaders to involve Aboriginal elders in event planning
- sponsor a family violence prevention poster and slogan contest in schools
- plan a public forum about family violence
- regularly submit family violence articles to your local newspaper
- organize a display of articles, poems, short stories and art focusing on family violence
- encourage all helping professions to display their service information in a trade fair
- offer local restaurants placemats highlighting Family Violence Prevention Month community events
- host a series of brown bag lunches featuring presentations on building healthy relationships

## Look What Happened Around The Province in 2004!

*Information provided by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters*

Communities across Alberta worked hard to help raise awareness about family violence prevention. Advertisements, mayoral proclamations, and articles filled many daily and weekly newspapers. Speakers shared their expertise on topics ranging from violence towards those with disabilities to elder abuse.

Please use the following summary of 2004 events to help you plan future education and awareness activities.

### SUMMARY OF 2004 FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

- Ambassador of the Way presentations made to community groups, in partnership with United Way
- conferences hosted, including the Strengthening the Spirit Conference and the Diverse Voices Conference, mail outs, press releases, table napkins and placemats printed with family violence prevention information
- volunteers hand distributed information on FVPM and *Hitting Hurts Everyone* buttons
- inserts and buttons distributed to churches
- radio and television interviews, features and public service announcements
- radio public service announcements recorded by shelter staff and support group members
- displays of books, videos and banners at schools, libraries, malls, recreation facilities and friendship centres
- Alberta Council of Women's Shelters' Silent Witness Display, an exhibit representing women and third party victims of domestic homicide
- children participated in group activities related to family violence prevention
- presentations directed to specific groups such as students, nurses and other caregivers
- panel discussions with crown prosecutor, RCMP, Victim Services, Mental Health, AADAC, medical doctor, hospital social worker, women's shelter and family violence prevention coordinator
- video presentations, public speakers, panel discussions and forums to discuss topics such as:
  - problems encountered by rural shelters
  - workplace security
  - children who witness abuse
  - law and family violence
  - healthy relationships
  - movie nights at public library (showing *Sleeping with the Enemy* and *What's Love Got to do with It?*) followed by facilitated discussion on topics including stalking, victim/abuser portrayals and abuse types
- shelter hosted free community night for the Aboriginal community
- luncheon for business members highlighted workplace and family violence
- Family Violence Awareness *Walk for Hope*

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

- White Ribbon Campaign
- Purple Ribbon Campaign, with ribbons symbolizing protest against all forms of interpersonal violence
  - fundraisers supported shelters and other services
- food kiosks promoted FVPM and donated portion of proceeds from one day of sales
- requested signatures from men against violence towards women
- celebrities spoke out against family violence
- quotes from experts commenting on family violence
- passports stamped at FVPM community events, with a draw for those with full passports
- December 6<sup>th</sup> Candle Light Ceremony for victims of the Montreal Massacre

## Family Violence Prevention Throughout the Year

Women, men and children live with family violence every day of the year. It is important to work together every day to focus attention on the important message Family Violence...It's Your Business.

Many different awareness days, weeks and months are proclaimed locally, provincially and nationally throughout the year. Use your creativity to make links between these awareness days and family violence.

For example, you can link Alzheimer's disease awareness with elder abuse; National Child Day with child abuse prevention; or Father's Day with men engaging in anti-violence activities.

An important way to prevent family violence is to build healthy families. Some of the awareness days listed below are about strengthening families and communities, as well as having fun. They provide numerous opportunities for linking family violence prevention.

## Awareness Days

### JANUARY

**Alzheimer Awareness Month**, *National, Alzheimer Society, [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)*

- work with your local Alzheimer Society and seniors organizations to educate your community about senior abuse

**Family Literacy Day**, *(January 27) National, ABC Canada Literacy Foundation, [www.abc-canada.org](http://www.abc-canada.org)*

- arrange book donations for your local women's shelter

### FEBRUARY

**Eating Disorder Week**, *(1st week February) National Eating Disorder Information Centre, [www.nedic.ca](http://www.nedic.ca)*

- work with local schools to educate young people about eating disorders, the reasons eating disorders develop and the potential links to family violence
- create resource lists for students and teachers

**Family Day**, *(3rd Monday), Alberta*

- collect information from local social service organizations on creating healthy families
- encourage local leisure centres to promote a family day event

## MARCH

### **Red Cross Month, National, Canadian Red Cross, [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)**

- contact your nearest Red Cross Association and arrange for school presentations on dating violence, family violence, bullying and reducing violence in sports

### **International Women's Day (IWD), (March 8) International, Status of Women Canada, [www.swc-cfc.gc.ca](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca)**

- contact the Status of Women Canada office to request IWD materials for your community
- write an article for your local newspaper about IWD and provide facts about woman abuse in your region, Alberta, Canada and internationally
- arrange for a radio interview about IWD and focus the interview on family violence
- send your local women's organizations letters congratulating them on their important work and provide facts about IWD and family violence
- start an IWD committee in your community

### **World Theatre Day, (March 27) International, World Theatre Day, [www.iti-worldwide.org](http://www.iti-worldwide.org)**

- arrange for drama students in local schools to write and perform plays relating to family violence
- during Family Violence Prevention Month, stage the plays in schools, as well as local conferences and community meetings

## APRIL

### **Child Abuse Prevention Month, National**

- call your local Alberta Children's Services office for information about child abuse
- encourage local day care centers to develop poster displays about Child Abuse Prevention Month and have resources ready for parents
- encourage your local newspaper to run an ad about Child Abuse Prevention Month, featuring helpful community resources
- collect donations of toys, children's books and clothing for your local women's shelter
- plan a community presentation about child abuse and child abuse prevention
- encourage your local library to set up a display of books on child abuse

### **Dental Health Month, National, Canadian Dental Association, [www.cda-adc.ca](http://www.cda-adc.ca)**

- collect toothpaste, toothbrushes and dental floss donations from local dentists for your local women's shelter
- write a letter to all your local dentists and hygienists, asking them to think about family violence when checking patients
- provide dentists with office posters, literature and the number of your local women's shelter



**Poetry Month, National, League of Canadian Poets, [www.poets.ca](http://www.poets.ca)**

- arrange for local poets to conduct poetry readings on the subject of family violence, with admission or donations given to your local women's shelter
- arrange for a school or community wide poetry contest on the topic of family violence

**World Health Day (April 7) International, Canadian Society for International Health, [www.csih.org](http://www.csih.org)**

- contact the World Health Organization and the Alberta Medical Association for information on family violence and health
- create a poster exhibit that includes local resource numbers and display them at health unit offices, family clinics and hospital emergency rooms

**Global Youth Service Day, (April 11 - 13) International, Volunteer Canada, [www.volunteercanada.ca](http://www.volunteercanada.ca)**

- arrange for a volunteer youth brigade to visit your local women's shelter for a work project such as yard clean up, donation sorting and children's activities
- write an article for your local paper that ties youth and volunteerism with the local women's shelter

**National Law Day, (April 13) National, Canadian Bar Association, [www.cba.org](http://www.cba.org)**

- arrange a community information night with local lawyers discussing family violence and the law
- arrange for lawyers to visit your local women's shelter to answer law and family violence related questions

**Canada Book Day, (April 23) National, Writers' Trust of Canada, [www.writerstrust.com](http://www.writerstrust.com)**

- arrange for book donations to your local women's shelter
- invite local authors and celebrities to have a "story night" for children in your local women's shelter
- encourage your local library to create a display of family violence books

**National Volunteer Week, (last week) National, Volunteer Canada, [www.volunteercanada.org](http://www.volunteercanada.org)**

- encourage community volunteer service organizations to plan a service project for your local women's shelter
- contact the volunteer coordinator at your local women's shelter and make a personal commitment

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### MAY

#### **Mother's Day, National**

- encourage hair salons to donate hairstyling or hair products for women staying at your local women's shelter
- plan a mother's day tea, with family violence fact sheets available and proceeds going to your local women's shelter

#### **Emergency Preparedness Week, (1st Week) National, Emergency Preparedness**

*Canada, [www.ocipep.gc.ca](http://www.ocipep.gc.ca)*

- write an article about the daily emergencies families face with respect to family violence
- complete an emergency checklist based on a women's shelter emergency list (Ex: Do I have copies of my important papers? Do I have an extra set of keys?)

#### **Be Kind to Animals Week/Animal Health Week, (1st week) National, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, [www.canadianveterinarians.net](http://www.canadianveterinarians.net)**

- research information linking pet abuse with family violence and create displays at veterinary offices and pet stores
- organize a "pet fostering program" to assist women who are reluctant to go to a shelter due to fear for a pet's safety

#### **National Kids Day, (1st Week) National, Kids Help Phone, [www.kidshelphone.ca](http://www.kidshelphone.ca)**

- contact Kids Help Phone to access educational materials for your community
- call your local Alberta Children's Services office for information about child abuse
- encourage local day care centres and schools to develop poster displays about child abuse and provide resources for parents and kids
- encourage your local newspaper to run a Child Abuse Prevention Month ad featuring helpful community resources
- collect donations of toys, children's books and clothing for your local women's shelter and youth emergency shelter
- plan a community presentation about child abuse and child abuse prevention
- encourage your local library to display child abuse books

#### **National Police Week, (2nd Week) National, RCMP, [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca)**

- request statistics from your local RCMP office about charges laid in family violence cases and write a letter to the editor of your local paper about the importance of:
  - police support for victims of family violence
  - taking disclosures of family violence seriously
  - working in collaboration with agencies aiding victims

#### **World Red Cross Day, (May 8) National, Canadian Red Cross Society, [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)**

- contact your nearest Red Cross Association and arrange for school presentations on dating violence, family violence, bullying and reducing violence in sports

**Canada Health Day, (May 12) National, Canadian Public Health Association, [www.cpha.ca](http://www.cpha.ca)**

- contact the Canadian Public Health Association and the Alberta Medical Association for family violence and health information to create poster displays with local resource numbers for health unit offices, family clinics and hospital emergency rooms

**International Day of Families, (May 15) International, United Nations, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)**

- gather information from your local social service organizations on creating a healthy family
- encourage local leisure centres to promote a family day

**Aboriginal Awareness Week, (3rd Week) National**

- contact your local Native Friendship Society and ask to volunteer for special events
- educate yourself about family violence in the Aboriginal community
- learn what resources exist in your community for Aboriginal families

**Victorian Order of Nurses Week, (3rd Week) National, VON Canada, [www.von.ca](http://www.von.ca)**

- learn if your local VON chapter operates a “People in Crisis Program” supporting victims of family violence
- write a letter to all your local medical clinics, providing the number of your local women’s shelter and ask them to think about family violence when checking patients

**Active Healthy Kids Day, (May 27) National, Active Healthy Kids Canada, [www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)**

- volunteer with the children’s program at your local women’s shelter
- arrange a free outing for children at the local women’s shelter to visit a local leisure centre or movie theatre

## JUNE

**Seniors’ Month, National, One Voice – The Canadian Seniors Network, [www.onevoice.ca](http://www.onevoice.ca)**

- work with your local seniors’ organization to educate your community on senior abuse

**National Day against Homophobia, (June 1) National, Foundation Emergence, [www.emergence.qc.ca](http://www.emergence.qc.ca)**

- learn about the particular issues facing same sex couples in abusive relationships

**International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression, (June 4), International, United Nations, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)**

- research ways you can relieve suffering from various forms of abuse occurring in international locations
- discuss the rights of children in different countries with people you know from other parts of the world

# prevention

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

**National Aboriginal Day, (June 21) National, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca)**

- go to celebrations and events sponsored by your local Aboriginal community
- collect promotional material and distribute it in your community
- learn about family violence in the Aboriginal community

### JULY

**Canada Day, (July 1) National**

- celebrate by recognizing the Canadian values demonstrated by social program staff and volunteers
- encourage others to appreciate Canada by comparing Canadian social programs to those of other countries
- support healthy lifestyles by reminding everyone that Canadians are people with the freedom to make their own choices

### AUGUST

**International Youth Day, International, United Nations, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)**

- celebrate youth in your community by promoting youth volunteerism and creating leisure activity opportunities
- support youth in your community by bringing attention to child abuse

### SEPTEMBER

**Big Brothers Big Sisters Month, National, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, [www.bbbsc.ca](http://www.bbbsc.ca)**

- contact your local organization and learn about becoming a big sister or big brother
- start a mentoring program for children at risk
- encourage participation in the “Share a Little Magic” campaign, which involves MasterCard Canada donating \$75,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada if 25,000 visitors hit the BIGS website at [www.bigsisters.ca](http://www.bigsisters.ca) on September 23, 2005.

**World Suicide Prevention Day, (September 10th) International, International Association for Suicide Prevention, [www.med.uio.no/isap](http://www.med.uio.no/isap)**

- ask your local suicide prevention organization how volunteers are trained to deal with family violence issues and inform the public by writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper

**World Alzheimer’s Day, (September 21) International, Alzheimer Society, [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)**

- work with your local Alzheimer Society and seniors’ organizations to educate your community about seniors’ abuse

**National Family Week, (2nd Week) National, Family Service Canada, [www.familyservicecanada.org](http://www.familyservicecanada.org)**

- gather information from your local social service organizations about creating healthy families
- encourage local leisure centres to promote a family day

## OCTOBER

**Mental Illness Awareness Week, (October 3rd - 10th, 2005) International, Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, [www.miaaw-ssmm.ca](http://www.miaaw-ssmm.ca)**

- attend education sessions offered by the Alberta Mental Health Board and your local health regions

**YWCA Week without Violence, (3rd Week) National, YWCA, [www.ywcacanada.ca](http://www.ywcacanada.ca)**

- contact your nearest YWCA to access educational materials on Week without Violence
- organize activities in conjunction with your nearest YWCA

**National School Library Day, (October 24, 2005) International, [www.nsls.ca](http://www.nsls.ca)**

- display books that tell stories relating to family violence and bullying
- promote the importance of reading as a method to discover different approaches to problem solving

## NOVEMBER

**Family Violence Prevention Month, Provincial, Government of Alberta, [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB)**

- visit the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Division of Children's Services website at [www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB)
- visit the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters website at [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca) and access Family Violence Prevention Month activities
- plan a family violence forum in your community and showcase resources for families

**National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Campaign, National, Canada Safety Council, [www.safety-council.org](http://www.safety-council.org)**

- create a slogan against family violence and automate it as part of your email signature
- create a poster for your office door that says Family Violence is a Crime
- if there is a crime prevention campaign in your community, ask planners to include family violence information

**National Bullying Awareness Week, (November 14th to 20th, 2005) National, [www.bullying.org](http://www.bullying.org)**

- organize a Peer Power Anti-Bullying presentation at your school by joining the Peer Power Network at [www.bullying.org](http://www.bullying.org)
- follow the example of Cochrane, Alberta and Brantford, Ontario by proclaiming your town "Striving to be Bully-free"
- present an in-school pageant day where students present skits about bullying
- host a school-wide competition to create anti-bullying slogans and posters for a promotional campaign
- encourage younger children to visit the Bully-boy and Gossip-girl website [www.bullyboy.ca](http://www.bullyboy.ca) where they can learn about bullying and enter a contest

**National Child Day, (November 29) National, Health Canada, [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)**

- access and post copies of the UN declaration “The Rights of the Child” in locations used by families

**International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, (November 25)**

*International, United Nations, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)*

- include global statistics on violence against women in your family violence prevention month activities

DECEMBER

**International Day of Disabled Persons, (December 3rd) International, United Nations,**

*[www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disiddp.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disiddp.htm)*

- host an information campaign to show how people with disabilities seek independent lifestyles
- host a performance to showcase the contributions of persons with disabilities
- choose to be more observant and compile a list of places you go that are inaccessible for people with disabilities

For more information, contact:

Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
 Division for Social Policy and Development  
 United Nations Headquarters  
 Two United Nations Plaza, 13th Floor  
 New York, N.Y. 10017  
 Fax: 1 (212) 963-3062

**National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, (December 6th) National,**

*Status of Women Canada, [www.swc-cfc.gc.ca](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca)*

- contact the nearest Status of Women Canada office for promotion information
- organize a candle light ceremony in remembrance of the women murdered at L’Ecole Polytechnic in Montreal

**Human Rights Day, (December 10th) International, Canadian Heritage,**

*[www.canadianheritage.gc.ca](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca)*

- read women’s rights information from Status of Women Canada
- organize a coffee break or lunch discussion with colleagues or friends and discuss how living violence free is a basic human right



### **Tell Us Your Success Stories**

We want to hear from you! Family violence prevention success stories will be featured in next year's Family Violence Prevention Community Resource Guide.

Tell us about you and your community's efforts. Together we can make a difference!

SEND POSTCARDS, NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS OR REPORTS TO:

#### **Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying**

**Alberta Children's Services**

Attention: Deborah Hurford

Public Awareness and Education Coordinator

6th Floor Sterling Place

9940 - 106 Street

Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2N2

Fax: (780) 427-2039

Please include:

- your contact information
- names of people who appear in any photos
- name of photographer
- a note stating whether you would like any originals returned to you

## Alberta Child and Family Services Authority Regional Offices

### Region 1 – Southwest Alberta

107 Palliser Centre  
3305 18th Avenue North  
Lethbridge, AB T1H 5S1  
Ph: (403) 381-5543 Fx: (403) 381-5608  
Email: south.west@gov.ab.ca

### Region 2 – Southeast Alberta

#205, Provincial Bldg.  
346 - 3rd Street S.E.  
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0G7  
Ph: (403) 529-3753 Fx: (403) 528-5244

### Region 3 – Calgary and Area

#300 - 1240 Kensington Road NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 3P7  
Ph: (403) 297-6100 Fx: (403) 297-7214  
Email: crv-info.general@gov.ab.ca

### Region 4 – Central Alberta

3rd Floor, 4826 Ross Street  
Red Deer, AB T4N 1X4  
Ph: (403) 341-8642 Fx: (403) 341-8654  
Email: cenabcfssa@gov.ab.ca

### Region 5 – East Central Alberta

PO Box 300, 4811 - 49 Avenue  
Killam, AB T0B 2L0  
Ph: (780) 385-7160 Fx: (780) 385-7163  
Email: eastcentralalbertacfsa@gov.ab.ca

### Region 6 – Edmonton and Area

6th & 7th Floor Oxbridge Place  
9820 - 106 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2J6  
Phone: (780) 427-2250  
or (780) 422-3355  
Fax 6th Floor: (780) 427-0601  
Fax 7th Floor: (780) 422-6864

### Region 7 – North Central Alberta

2nd Floor, Administration Building  
5143-50 Street  
Box 4742  
Barrhead, Alberta T7N 1A6  
Ph: (780) 305-2440 Fx: (780) 305-2444  
Email: children.services7@gov.ab.ca

### Region 8 – Northwest Alberta

3001 Provincial Bldg 10320 - 99 Street  
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 6J4  
Ph: (780) 538-5122 Fx: (780) 538-5137  
Email: children.services8@gov.ab.ca

### Region 9 – Northeast Alberta

4th Floor, Provincial Building  
9915 Franklin Avenue  
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K4  
Ph: (780) 743-7461 Fx: (780) 743-7474  
Email: children.services9@gov.ab.ca

### Region 10 – Métis Settlements

# 412 Mayfield Business Centre  
10525 170 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5P 4W2  
Reception: (780) 427-1033  
Ph: (780) 427-1033 Fx: (780) 415-0177

If you do not know your service region, visit the Children's Services website at [www.child.gov.ab.ca](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca) for a listing of communities and their corresponding CFSA, or call the Children's Services information line at (780) 422-3004 (dial 310-000 for toll free access).

## **Borrowing books from the Alberta Children's Services Library**

### **How do I borrow books from the Alberta Children's Services library?**

It's easy. Use your TAL Card.

### **How do I get a TAL Card?**

Maintain membership in good standing at your local library. The cost of getting a library card varies from library to library. Some waive library card fees for low-income members. You will need to provide picture identification and proof of a local address to get a library card.

Once you are a member of your local library, fill out a TAL Card registration form to request and receive a TAL card.

### **How do I borrow books with my TAL Card?**

When you want to borrow books from another library using your TAL Card, show your ID and your TAL Card. You can borrow 5 books from each participating library.

### **How do I get more information on the TAL Card?**

Visit [www.thealbertalibrary.ab.ca](http://www.thealbertalibrary.ab.ca) for additional information.

## **Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying**

Alberta Children's Services

6th Floor, Sterling Place

9940-106 Street

Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2N2

Ph: (780) 422-8519

Fx: (780) 427-2039

[www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/PFVB)

**Celebrate Alberta women  
and their bravery, strength and belief  
in a better future.**



To order your book, call the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters  
at 780-456-7000, toll free at 1-866-331-3933 or visit [www.acws.ca](http://www.acws.ca)