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**YUKON'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TREATMENT OPTION COURT FEATURED IN INTERNATIONAL BOOK**

WHITEHORSE – An international book about innovative court programs is profiling the Yukon's Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court as one of 69 exemplary court practices.

The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, an international interdisciplinary organization dedicated to family conflict resolution, recently published *Exemplary Family Court Programs and Practices*. The book features the Yukon's Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court program as one of four specialty court programs.

"This is an honour that pays tribute to the hard work of staff and their commitment to therapeutic justice and the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court program over the past four years," Justice Minister John Edzerza said.

The Domestic Violence Treatment Option (DVTO) Court is one of the first domestic violence courts in North America and it is a model for programs across Canada and United States. Drawing from a team of lawyers, counselors, probation officers, judiciary and RCMP, the DVTO program shifts the focus of domestic violence from victims "making the case" in court to offenders' abusive behaviours, how they will alter their behaviours and keep families safe.

"We're extremely proud of our DVTO Court program," said Sandra Bryce, manager of the Victim Service/Family Violence Prevention Unit. "Being profiled in a book that will be used by courts and service providers around the world tells us that we're leaders, here in the Yukon, in the search for better ways to heal broken families."

Yukon's Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court currently handles 80-85 percent of domestic violence allegations. The program enables offenders to participate in a variety of treatment options before being sentenced. Support services are also provided to the victim, such as counseling and assistance with safety planning.

For more information on Yukon's Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court program visit [www.justice.gov.yk.ca/pdf/pubs/dvtocourt.pdf](http://www.justice.gov.yk.ca/pdf/pubs/dvtocourt.pdf) or [www.justice.gov.yk.ca/prog/victims.html](http://www.justice.gov.yk.ca/prog/victims.html).

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