

ON THE HOMEFRONT

UNITED IN BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Aboriginal Healing

Although family violence can be found in all cultural, racial and religious groups, Aboriginal individuals who are abused or abusive face a number of additional concerns. Counselling and treatment are often unavailable in rural and isolated areas, and many times people are forced to leave their communities, abandoning their support systems, kinship networks and cultural roots.

In Canada, it is violence in the domestic context that is the most pervasive form of victimization experienced by Aboriginal women. According to Statistics Canada, compared to non-Aboriginal women, First Nations women are three times more likely to experience spousal assault and more severe forms of violence, with over half indicating their children were witness to the violence.

Aboriginal people have defined family violence "as a consequence to colonization, forced assimilation and cultural genocide." Due to the sensitive history of First Nations communities, HomeFront and other partnering agencies have been working collaboratively as representatives for the Strengthening the Spirit Committee to develop and deliver culturally appropriate family violence programs for Aboriginal men, women and children.

Laura Ducharme, HomeFront's Community Mobilization Officer, assists both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities surrounding Calgary in developing a justice response model to addressing domestic violence. She also serves as the Co-Chair of the Strengthening the Spirit Committee and is the assigned Aboriginal Domestic Violence Treatment Coordinator. Over

the years the committee has worked with communities such as Tsuu Tina and Morley First Nations, recently supporting Rocky Mountain House and currently in Cochrane assisting the development of a coordinated justice response.

"First Nations women are three times more likely to experience spousal assault..."

In Cochrane, a developing committee is composed of representatives from the Crown Prosecutors Office, RCMP, FCSS, Victim Services, Child and Family Services, Probation, Stoney Corrections, Stoney Victim Services, Cochrane Community Family Services, Morley Child Welfare, and Cochrane Mental Health. "This inclusive group of individuals and resources are integral to the development of the coordinated response" states Laura. "With close proximity to the Morley Reserve, Cochrane wants to ensure they are responding effectively to domestic violence offenders and supporting Strengthening the Spirit's efforts towards making appropriate treatment available for Aboriginal domestic violence offenders."

Oskayi Kiskinotahn is the clinical cultural program that Strengthening the Spirit committee shares with First Nations communities. The program is focused on Aboriginal facilitators, providing a model of recovery from family violence and abuse through an emphasis on Aboriginal family and identity. "There are community members that want to help

provide a program like Oskayi Kiskinotahn to reduce domestic violence in their communities,” comments Laura.

Aboriginal men’s and women’s programs continue proving effective and a new children’s program will be piloted in partnership with Metis Child and Family Services later this year. “There is an increased interest in these programs as communities realize the difference it makes in peoples’ lives” affirms Laura. “What we witness at each group is an increased awareness of personal issues, an awareness of where the anger

stems from and a greater understanding of the effects that anger has on their children.”

Funded by the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, Alberta Mental Health Board and the United Way of Calgary and Area, the work continues to expand across Alberta. With the support of local agencies such as HomeFront, YWCA Sheriff King Home and the Alliance to End Violence, the committee looks to build capacity among First Nations communities, ultimately moving towards a vision of self-sustainability. **HF**

HRMI - High Risk Management Initiative

A new collaborative initiative is in the early stages of development to identify and manage Calgary’s serious high risk domestic violence offenders.

Working with representatives from Crown, the Calgary Police Service Domestic Conflict Unit, HomeFront, Probation, AADAC, Forensic Assessment and Outpatient Services (FAOS), and Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority, the High Risk Management Initiative (HRMI) will provide risk assessment and management at the key decision points in family violence cases where legal, clinical, mental health, substance abuse and victim safety issues are evaluated and intervention is determined.

According to Alicia Van de Sande, HomeFront’s HRMI representative, “the goal of this initiative will be to provide

appropriate intervention and containment, while increasing the safety of those at risk.”

HomeFront has played an influential role in bringing appropriate representatives from the justice community together with service providers to discuss how to improve responsiveness to escalating risk situations and improve the coordinated strategic justice responses to high risk offenders.

“This initiative will have a direct impact on reducing recidivism (re-offence) rates,” says Van de Sande, “especially those that are increasingly violent in nature.”

Currently, the number of offenders selected for supervision through this initial pilot project is limited, with the intention to eventually seek funding and expand the initiative into a sustainable coordinated community-justice program. **HF**

Strength in Numbers: Making Collaboration Work

In a time of economic uncertainty, HomeFront has turned to our tagline, *United in Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence* for reassurance. The tagline was developed a year ago to appropriately acknowledge the collaborative nature of our work and tremendous successes over the years.

Although HomeFront is a testament to collaboration, the essence of how a coordinated body works is not easily understood. Collaboration is the behind the scenes work - narrowed down to a series of emails, teleconferences and meetings - spending hours cultivating relationships that may not lead to immediate results, but rather to large systemic change.

Working collaboratively has changed the way we address issues such as domestic violence in Calgary. With representatives from different agencies and services continuously sharing information, gaps in services are addressed more efficiently and new initiatives are introduced to ensure clients are supported through the difficult journey from domestic violence to achieving healthy and bright futures.

Collaboration is not only a benefit to clients. The same safety net of agencies and services joined to support families in turn unites the sector and strengthens our work as a whole. Together we have become more influential and over the years have faced many challenges that have reinforced our belief in collaboration.

The current instability of the economy is our next great challenge and one that we will face together. By continuing to re-engage key stakeholders and build new relationships, the domestic violence sector is better able to leverage economies of scale, share scarce resources and maintain morale by enduring common hardships.

HomeFront believes during times such as this, collaboration is a viable solution. At HomeFront we will continue to rely on our collaborative roots to survive the downturn, looking to our key partners for support and find strength in numbers to ultimately bridge us through to better times. **HF**



Hi- 5 10/11 Club



To recognize the positive and dedicated work of Calgary's frontline officers, HomeFront and the Calgary Police Service give a "High Five" to deserving officers for their work on a 10/11, which is police code for a domestic call.

Case:

On November 19th 2008 the Calgary Police Service responded to a domestic complaint in a multi-family complex.

Constable Grouchey #4327 and Constable Tony Allen #4406, of District 4, were first on scene and made the quick decision to enter a high risk domestic scene where they could see the female victim lying on the kitchen floor, with extensive injuries.

It was unknown if the offender was still in the residence, if there were weapons or other officer safety concerns. The two officers put the victim's medical needs as their priority. While clearing the residence for other occupants the officers were mindful to gather items that could be used to assist in stopping the victim's bleeding.

Constable Grouchey identified the source of significant blood loss, a laceration to the victim's throat, and there was

much broken glass in the area from a broken picture window. Constable Grouchey took towels and began immediately applying pressure to the source of the blood loss.

Injuries the victim sustained required Constable Grouchey to push his fingers several centimeters into the cut to apply enough pressure to stop the artery from causing further blood loss.

Despite several potential distractions, the two officers maintained composure. Constable Grouchey was able to keep the victim conscious and coherent long enough to learn her identity and the fact the victim knew the offender. While Constable Grouchey attended to the victim, Constable Allen spoke to an occupant in the residence, and gained information on the suspect that had fled the residence.

Police advised Paramedics it was safe to enter the residence, and they were able to provide medical assistance. One paramedic indicated he was surprised by the large amount of blood loss. Police were commended on their quick actions to limit further blood loss, and without their rapid intervention the victim could have died or suffered severe brain damage due to the loss of blood.

District 4 Detectives John Orr #3463 and Seth Macaig #3167 were primary investigators, and worked closely with the Domestic Conflict Unit and District 4 street officers. Through a coordinated effort the offender was located 24 hours later and arrested for the serious assault. Without the quick actions of the initial responding officers, this incident could have been tragic. Because of the thorough investigation this offender is now before the courts on serious domestic offenses, and away from the victim who is now safe, and healing well. **HF**

Emotional Injury and Recovery in Children Exposed to Domestic Violence



Following an inspiring keynote address to local business leaders at the annual Alberta Council of Women's Shelters Breakfast with the Guys, Lundy Bancroft joined the domestic violence sector in the afternoon to further discuss best practices when working with children who have witnessed domestic violence.

Lundy Bancroft has twenty years of experience specializing in interventions for abusive men and the children that are exposed to them. He is the author of three books in the field, including *Why Does He Do That*, *When Dad Hurts Mom*, and the national prize-winner *The Batterer as Parent*. He has also served extensively as a custody evaluator, child abuse investigator, and expert witness in domestic violence and child abuse cases.

Speaking to community service providers on March 12, Lundy offered his insight into the emotional injury and recovery that children experience, and spoke passionately about the importance for children to find freedom and healing at any

age from trauma, abuse and childhood wounds.

"Dr Bancroft's passion and insight hopefully will inspire and renew our community's commitment to ending the abuse of children" states HomeFront Executive Director, Kevin McNichol. "His comprehensive research and insight also encourages us to discover more effective ways of intervening in child abuse cases, while supporting and fostering the protective or non-abusive parent in raising their children."

An acclaimed author and workshop leader, Lundy is also a prominent activist devoted to recovering the custody rights of protective parents. Dr. Bancroft's website offers resources and tools and extensive advice for mothers about pursuing their particular cases when children have been exposed to a violent or sexually abusive father. He encourages professionals working with families in the domestic violence sector to also visit his website www.lundybancroft.com and learn more about Child Custody Justice.

HomeFront was proud to present Dr. Lundy Bancroft for this special presentation and would like to thank the event sponsors, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters and Felesky Flynn LLP for making it possible. **HF**

The RAVE (Religion and Violence e-Learning) Project: Building Bridges Between Secular and Faith-Based Service Providers Related to Domestic Violence

by Barbara Fisher-Townsend, Ph.D.

The RAVE Project, funded by the Lilly Endowment, is an innovative approach to the delivery of web-based resources and training to assist religious leaders and faith communities around North America and beyond in responding to the issue of domestic violence.

Under the direction of Dr. Nancy Nason-Clark, this initiative offers best practices for responding to the needs of religious victims, resources for enhancing spiritual accountability for religious men who have acted abusively, ways to be involved in a collaborative community response to abuse and many practical guides for increasing the awareness of men and women (and teens) in congregational life about this pressing social issue. Recent initiatives include a teen dating game and a religious resources map, both of which are expected to be launched within the next few months.

Calgary is one of four location sites (the others are in the United States) selected to partner with the RAVE initiative. In each site we work with four constituency teams – criminal justice, religious leaders, advocates, and the therapeutic community.

HomeFront has been essential to the partnership development in Calgary. Through HomeFront, meetings have been organized, introductions arranged, connections suggested, and presentations facilitated. HomeFront offers an exemplary model of a collaborative community response to domestic violence that includes faith community representatives; a model that the RAVE team holds out as the ‘gold standard’ in Canada.

For more information visit www.theraveproject.org. **HF**



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HomeFront is funded by **Alberta Children's Services, Alberta Mental Health Board, The Calgary Foundation, City of Calgary, The Prairieaction Foundation, United Way of Calgary and Area** and the **Victims of Crime Fund**

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