



Rural Realities Faced by Service Providers and Women Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence When Navigating the Justice System

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The Project

The research questions:

- I. What are the experiences and challenges that service providers face in rural communities when helping women survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) navigate through all levels of the justice system (such as police, both family and criminal courts, crown prosecutors, victim services programs, legal aid)?

- II. What are the experiences and challenges encountered by women survivors of IPV in rural communities when navigating through all levels of the justice system (such as police, both family and criminal courts, crown prosecutors, victim services programs, legal aid)?

Members

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History of the project

- Action for Change --- Empowering Women Survivor of IPV to Build Healthier and Safer Lives
- Crime Prevention Awareness Week
- Funding from Canadian observatory on the justice system's response to IPV

What the literature is saying

- Pro-arrest policies are in force in police departments across the country
- Specialized court processes are now deeply embedded in the Canadian criminal justice response to IPV, having been implemented in some form in many provinces and the Yukon Territory
- These responses are centered on the premise that engaging strong and punitive crime control responses will denounce the violence by naming it a crime
- Underlying these policies is the presumption that arrest and prosecution is the most appropriate response to IPV in all cases.

Rural Communities are

Distance

Transportation

Farm animals

Housing

Lack of employment (seasonal job)

Less access to services

Childcare

Leaving community

Guns

No internet

Telephone/scanners/cell phones

No services or limited services in their language

Illiteracy

others

Attitudes

More conservative

Woman blaming

Silence and denial

Knowing but pretending

Isolation

Shame & embarrassment

Gossip

Abuser's status

In-law

Family or friends support

Family secret

Lack of privacy

Fear

Male privilege

Personal Values & Beliefs

Other

Barriers for women to involve justice system:

- women have a close relationship with their abuser
- women are dependent on partner for housing and income
- may know police officer or he/she may know abuser
- some of the members in justice system may be his or her family members, friends...
- attitude of people in system
- her security
- her lack of understanding of her rights.

When justice system is involved:

- lack of confidence in the justice system
- women are unwilling to testify or retract statement
- length of time it takes for police to come or attitude of police
- lack of efficiency of restraining orders or peace bonds
- lack and the cost of legal services
- lack of legal aid

When justice system is involved:

- lack of accountability for the abuser
- force women to participate in a process that fundamentally affects all aspects of their lives and wellbeing
- transfer power and control from violent partners to the system
- emphasize arrest and punishment of offenders over meeting the needs of victims
- assume that prosecution is always the best or safest solution.

Reasons women call police:

Primary reason women give for calling the police:

- immediate protection (88%)
- wanted their partners arrested (43%)
- to have the violent man removed, wanted violence to stop, or arrested, in equal parts
- most wanted advice and information about short- and long-term options
- Someone to talk to who would be supportive and non-judgmental.

Literature Review ...

- Police thought of as the gatekeepers into the justice system
- Need to shift the occupational culture in responding to domestic violence cases.

Diversities

Older people

New Immigrants

First Nations women

Adolescents

New Comers

People identifying as
minority ethnic

Same-sex relationships

Women recently
divorced/separated

People living with
disabilities

language, mobility, visual,
hearing, mental health,
other

Literature Review

- Aboriginal women may perceive the justice system in terms of mistrust
- Minority and marginalized women often suffer negative consequences as a result of legal intervention

Needs identified by marginalized women

- **Understanding:** the need to be believed and have their experiences validated
- **Reprieve:** the need for protection, safety, escape from the abuse
- **Survival:** medical attention and other basic human needs
- **Children:** needs of children were central to their own needs
- **Means, remedies and rebuilding:** coping mechanisms and resources to deal with the abuse; having long-term security

According to this study, the criminal justice response both enables and constrains women's ability to negotiate choice.

Attitudes toward issues of violence against women (NB)

- An increased from 65% to 73% in the number of people who consider it a crime to force wife to have sex (still 27%)
- An increase (52% to 58%) in the number of people who consider it a crime to slap girlfriend because she flirted with another man (still 42 %)
- An increase (41% to 47%) in the number of people who consider it a crime to slap wife when she complained he didn't make enough money (still 53%)
- An increase (21% to 28%) in the number of people who consider it a crime for father to slap 6 year old daughter on face because she broke a vase (still 72 %)

Prevalence

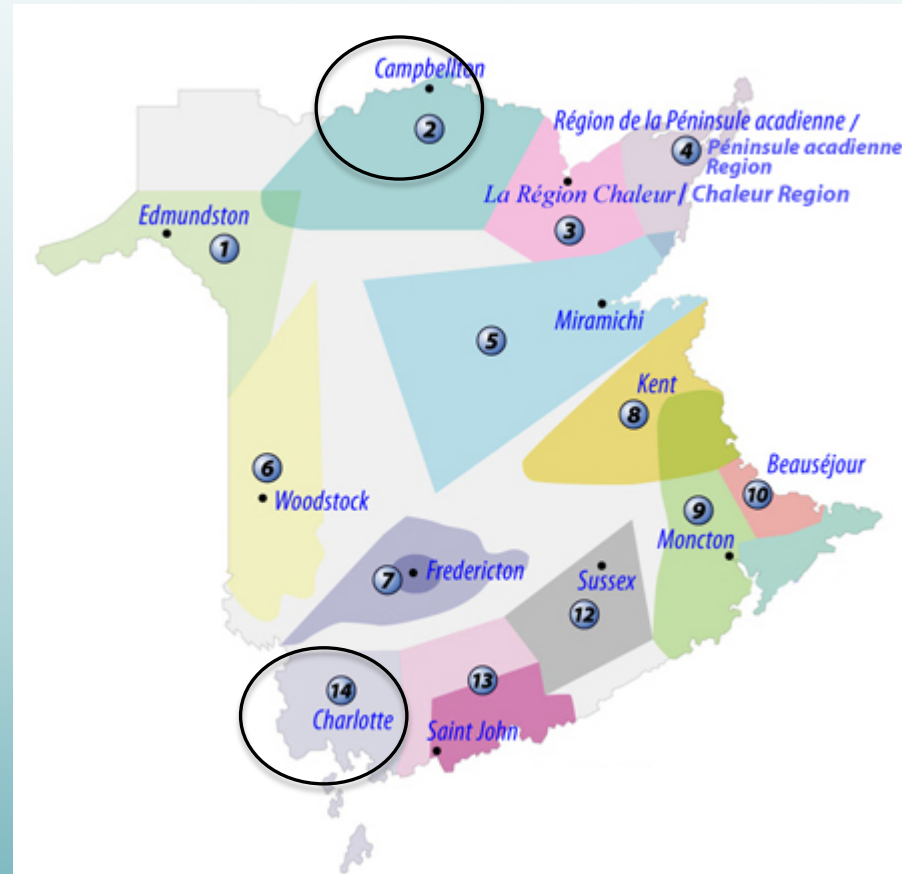
The study found that the rates of police-reported incidents of IPV perpetrated by spouses/former spouses and by family members were higher in rural versus urban areas during the period between 2006 and 2008.

Table 1: Domestic Violence Violations, Rates per 100,000 Population, 2006-2008

	Rural			Urban			Total (Rural and Urban)
	Spouse/ Former Spouse	Family	Total Rural	Spouse/ Former Spouse	Family	Total Urban	
2006	330	461	791	131	103	234	247
2007	393	673	1066	125	103	229	248
2008	392	670	1062	129	111	240	259

Source: Statistics Canada, *UCR2 Survey, 2006-2008*.

Regions Chosen



- <http://www.gnb.ca/0012/violence/map-e.asp>

Demographic for Restigouche County

Restigouche County (2011 population 32,594) is located in north-central New Brunswick. Forestry dominates the local economy.

Communities [\[edit\]](#)

There are nine incorporated municipalities within Restigouche County (listed by 2011 population):^[2]

Official Name	Designation	Area km ²	Pop 2011	Parish
Campbellton	City	18.66	7,385	Addington
Dalhousie	Town	14.51	3,512	Dalhousie
Kedgwick	Rural community	657.76	2,251	Grimmer
Saint-Quentin	Town	4.30	2,095	Saint-Quentin
Balmoral	Village	43.51	1,719	Balmoral
Charlo	Village	30.75	1,324	Colborne
Atholville	Village	10.25	1,237	Addington
Eel River Crossing	Village	17.43	1,209	Dalhousie
Tide Head	Village	19.57	1,036	Addington

Demographic for Charlotte County

- **Charlotte County** (2011 population 26,549) is located in the southwestern portion of New Brunswick, Canada. In most of the county, fishing and aquaculture dominate the local economy, although the town of St. Andrews is a tourist mecca and St. Stephen is dominated by the Ganong chocolate factory.

Charlotte County

There are six incorporated municipalities within Charlotte County (listed by 2011 population):

Official Name	Designation	Area km ²	Population	Parish
St. Stephen	Town	12.43	4,817	Saint Stephen
Grand Manan	Village	150.78	2,377	Grand Manan
St. Andrews	Town	8.35	1,889	Saint Andrews
St. George	Town	16.13	1,543	Saint George
Campobello	Rural community	39.59	1,056	Campobello
Blacks Harbour	Village	8.90	982	Pennfield

The Research

Focus Groups

- A focus group in English with service providers—
October 27, 2014 (St. Stephen)
- A focus group in English with survivors— October
27, 2014 (St. Stephen)
- A focus group in French with service providers—
November 4, 2014 (Campbellton)
- A focus group in English with survivors—
November 4, 2014 (Campbellton)
- Individual Questionnaires

Focus of Focus Groups

Explore the justice system in rural communities with service providers and with survivors of IPV to see:

- What is working
- What is not working
- What could work
- What could be improve

The Process for the Focus Groups

- Ethics proposal to UNB and then to STU
- Posters, letters of invitation were prepared
- Calls to service providers in both regions
- Logistics for focus groups
- Letters and posters were sent out
- Emails to service providers were sent
- Semi-structured questionnaire was developed
- Consent forms are developed

Questionnaire

Themes:

- Police Response
- Victim Services
- Court Response
- Protection Orders
- Family/Civil Law
- Probation
- Legal Aid Services
- Justice System – General
- Community General

Conclusion

This project will seek to advance our understanding of what service providers in rural communities experience with the justice system.



Thank you

For more information:

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