
Caring Partnerships

An Evaluation of A Community Development Model for Family Violence Prevention

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Partners in Research for Change

Prepared by:

Principal Investigator and author: Nancy Janovicek, Ph.D.

Editor: Deborah Doherty, Ph.D.

PRISM Project Manager: Elizabeth Blaney

Researchers: Adèle David - Shediac

Karen Miller and Monique Nicholson - Tobique First Nation

Deborah Doherty, Ph.D - Miramichi

Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research

678 Windsor Street, P.O. Box 4400

Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5A3

Tel: 506-453-3595

Fax: 506-453-4788

Email: fvrc@unb.ca

The Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (FVRC) is an Atlantic Region centre that conducts action-oriented research and public education on family violence and violence against women. The FVRC is affiliated with the University of New Brunswick and actively builds and sustains partnerships among academics, policy makers, community workers, and community organizations. The FVRC supports the work of many research teams conducting collaborative studies on a wide range of family violence issues throughout the Atlantic Provinces and beyond. The ultimate goal of the FVRC is to identify underlying root causes of family violence to promote evidence-based changes in practice and foster action to end violence and support the victims and survivors of family violence. The FVRC was established in 1992 and became a founding member of the Canadian Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence when it was formed in 1997.

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(The FVRC hopes to translate this report into French)

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Section I: Introduction

Raising awareness about woman abuse is a cornerstone of the movement to end family violence. In the 1970s, the women's movement made wife-battering a political issue. Feminists launched public education campaigns to raise consciousness about violence against women in society generally, and within the family in particular. Increased awareness of the issue mobilized support for grassroots initiatives such as opening transition houses and woman-centred services for battered women. More importantly, public education campaigns reached out directly to women in abusive relationships with strong messages of support and validation of their suffering.

Government involvement in public education campaigns is the result of intense feminist lobbying. In 1980, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women published *Wife battering: The vicious circle* (MacLeod, 1980). The report, written by Linda MacLeod, played an important role in raising awareness about abuse. MacLeod's argument that one in ten women had suffered from spousal abuse was shocking even to grassroots activists who had been providing frontline services to women. Based on these findings the federal government promised to conduct a study of violence in the family. In 1982, when Margaret Mitchell tabled the report of the parliamentary standing committee in the House of Commons, some Members of Parliament laughed. This disrespectful response to violence against women galvanized public concern about the issue. In response to this outrage, the federal government heeded feminist demands for the criminalization of spousal assault and advised police officers to press charges against abusive husbands. On the educational front, it established the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence in the Department of Health to collect, develop, and disseminate family violence research and information materials. Federal ministries and provincial governments began to develop various strategies to address violence. Status of Women Canada reviewed and coordinated these initiatives until 1986 when Department of Health and Welfare established the Family Violence Prevention Division (Levan, 1996).

Despite grassroots activism and government-sponsored campaigns, many people still feel that abuse is a private family matter. Federal and provincial governments have launched public education campaigns with the message that spousal assault is a crime that affects not only women and their children, but all of society. Posters and television advertisements insist that ending family violence is a social responsibility. However, the dissemination of information at the community level has been sporadic and uncoordinated. Moreover, public education campaigns have not instilled a sense of responsibility for ending family violence within communities. It became clear that community involvement was necessary in order to change attitudes about family violence. In 1988, Health Canada launched the Family Violence Initiative with the mandate to promote consultative and collaborative processes through the development of partnerships to raise awareness about the impact of family violence. In 1991, the federal government renewed the initiative; its mandate was "a call to action" (Doherty, 2002).

The New Brunswick “Caring Partnerships” is one of the many initiatives funded by the Family Violence Initiative. In 1993, representatives from the New Brunswick government and community organizations involved in family violence issues struck a committee to develop a community-based public awareness campaign about family violence. This committee became known as the *Steering Committee on Public Awareness of Family Violence through Community Partnerships*, and was the precursor to the *Provincial Caring Partnerships Committee (PCPC)*. The members of this committee believed that efforts to end family violence would be more effective if they were supported at the community or grassroots level because communities know best the local environment that creates specific barriers for women and children in violent families. More important, local committees know the resources available to families and what sort of anti-violence campaign would have the most impact in their communities.

Currently, the PCPC is the body that oversees this provincial project. It consists of representatives from provincial non-governmental organizations and the provincial government. While it is responsible for the finances and administration of the organization, its principal obligation is to serve as a catalyst for community-based initiatives. It provides support and resource assistance, and fosters networking opportunities for “caring communities” around New Brunswick to share ideas and practices on family violence awareness and prevention.

Section II: Methodology

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an historical overview of the New Brunswick Provincial Caring Communities Committees (PCPC), and to evaluate the initiative using several lenses of analysis known as the PRISM evaluation tool. The report presents the evolution of the committee and the strengths and challenges of the current structure. This component is intended to inform and facilitate on-going discussions about the future direction of the “Caring Partnerships” initiative and to make recommendations on moving forward. The PRISM evaluation also identifies the elements of the project, both at the provincial level and the community level, that contribute to making the PCPC a “better” practice in community development. The goal is share what is working, while promoting discussion around the challenges identified by key informants in enhancing the delivery of family violence awareness campaigns in the province.

The PRISM Evaluation Tool

The PRISM evaluation tool is a template for assessing rural family violence program outcomes. It was developed by the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (FVRC) as part of a research project called the “PRISM Project”. PRISM is an acronym for “Probing Rural Issues – Selecting Methodologies.” The project is a participatory action research project. Representatives from community organizations in New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island sit on its advisory committee and have played an instrumental role in defining the goals of the project, the PRISM evaluation tool, the community research, and the evaluation of the research results.

The goals of the PRISM Initiative are:

- to identify and enhance conditions and resources that will help rural women and girls live violence free lives;
- to document “better” practices and reflective approaches that address abuse of women and girls in rural communities in Atlantic Canada.

The PRISM project contributes to ending violence against women in the following ways:

- identifying key elements and effective approaches that prevent and address abuse;
 - providing local researchers with skills and knowledge to conduct interviews and focus groups in rural communities;
 - analyzing and documenting “better” practices;
 - developing an evaluation resource that other researchers can use to identify key elements for delivering programs;
 - developing an Atlantic Canada network for organizations involved in anti-violence work;
 - disseminating the findings of the research to grassroots organizations.
-

The FVRC began Phase 1 of the PRISM project in 2000 –2001 in collaboration with an advisory committee of researchers and community representatives. The project was entitled “*Violence Against Women and Girls in Rural and Socially Isolated Communities in Atlantic Canada.*” The goal during this phase was to identify and improve resources that would help women and girls in rural communities in Atlantic Canada to live violence free lives. The project produced:

- a literature review that identified the need for more research on violence against women and girls in rural and remote communities;
- The Mauve Paper (a fact sheet on violence against women and girls in rural communities);
- a conference to lay the foundation of a partnership among service providers, rural program deliverers, researchers, and others interested in ending abuse; and
- a proposal for Phase 2 of the project.

Phase 2, entitled “*PRISM: Probing Rural Issues – Selecting Methods to Address Abuse of Women and Girls,*” began in the spring of 2002, again in collaboration with an advisory committee. Its goal was to document “better” practices that address abuse in the lives of women and girls in rural communities in Atlantic Canada. Community-based researchers used the PRISM tool with its five lenses of analysis. The lenses are:

- abuse;
- feminism/gender/diversity;
- rural/remote;
- safety; and
- intervention

During the PRISM Project, researchers evaluated two anti-violence initiatives in each of the Atlantic Canada provinces. In New Brunswick, the two sites evaluated were initiatives developed by “caring partnership committees” in Maliseet First Nation at Tobique and Shédiac. A third initiative, developed by the caring partnerships committee in the Miramichi, was later researched specifically for this Caring Partnerships evaluation and report.¹

The FVRC received funding from Status of Women Canada for the PRISM initiative. The PCPC evaluation, including research on the history and an additional community, was made possible by an anonymous donation made to the FVRC specifically for this purpose. Status of Women Canada is funding phase 3 of the PRISM Project and it involves the dissemination of the research findings to communities and grassroots organizations with a view to promoting knowledge transfer. The PRISM project will adopt a “champions and mentors” model to develop links between communities and government and to encourage the implementation of “better” practices. Working collaboratively with the PCPC to undertake this evaluation is one way that the PRISM

Project can show the effectiveness of the template in assessing and sharing elements of better practice in family violence programming. Over time, we hope that representatives from the caring communities themselves will become champions of this process and mentors to other communities around the Atlantic

¹Adèle David conducted research in Shédiac. Karen Miller and Monique Nicholson conducted research at Tobique First Nation. Deborah Doherty volunteered to conduct the research in the Miramichi. Elizabeth Blaney was the project manager for the PRISM study.

Provinces and across Canada modelling effective, responsive violence prevention programs for women and girls in rural and isolated communities.

Methodology

This study used the PRISM Evaluation Tool developed by the PRISM Advisory Committee to evaluate the PCPC. The discussion of the PCPC is based on the records² of the PCPC and the caring communities. Interviews with five members of the provincial committee followed an adapted research schedule (Appendix 1). The discussions of the communities are based on two case studies conducted for the PRISM initiative and one conducted for the current study. These community case studies examine the impact of the provincial initiative at the local level. The case studies reflect the racial and ethnic diversity within New Brunswick. They are:

- *Kikahan Committee*, Maliseet First Nation at Tobique (A committee that adopts a holistic approach to addressing all forms of violence in Aboriginal families);
- *Centre de ressources et de crises familiales Beausejour* (A Family Crisis Resource Centre that serves Shediac, Cap-Pelé, and the rural area from Shemough to Cocagne. It is a bilingual service, but the majority of its clientele are francophone); and
- *Miramichi Family Violence Partnerships Committee* (A committee that promotes public education on family violence in a rural county with Anglophone, Francophone and First Nations communities).

²These records include minutes of board meetings and strategic planning sessions, funding proposals, correspondence, pamphlets, and newspaper clippings.

Section III: Historical Overview

This section provides a historical overview of the Provincial Caring Partnerships Committee and the evolution of family violence prevention and public awareness in New Brunswick. It outlines the strengths of the provincial committee and examines the challenges it faces currently. It focuses on the strengths of its member organizations that are clearly committed to eliminating violence against women and girls. These volunteers are dedicated to community-based public education programs to change attitudes about family violence and to improve services for women and girls. Securing stable funding is a major challenge as well as clarifying the relationships among the provincial committee, the staff, the communities, and government.

In the 1980s and 1990s, communities across New Brunswick organized services to address violence against women and girls. Grassroots groups organized transition houses in Tracadie-Sheila, Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, Edmondston, Bathurst, Campbellton, Miramichi, Sussex, and Woodstock. The Fredericton Sexual Assault Centre emerged to serve women who had been sexually assaulted. The New Brunswick Coalition of Transition Houses was established to lobby government on behalf of these organizations and organize conferences to bring together frontline workers to discuss strategies for ending violence against women. While transition houses had developed a network, other community groups that offered family violence prevention programs had not developed networks to share information and to support each other.

In the early 1990s, representatives from the provincial government and provincial non-governmental organizations identified the need to develop partnerships among the various groups in the province that were addressing family violence. In 1993, they launched the “Caring Partnerships” initiative.

The caring partnerships can be categorized into three rather distinct stages in terms of project name, governance, membership and development. These stages are:

Stage One: Steering Committee on Public Awareness of Family Violence through Caring Partnerships (1993-1996)

Stage Two: Provincial Caring Partnership Committee (1997-Present)

Stage Three: Revitalization of PCPC (Present – Future)

Stage One: Steering Committee on Public Awareness of Family Violence Through Community Partnerships (1993-1996)

Beginning a New Partnership: A Community Development Initiative to Raise Awareness of Family Violence

Raising awareness about family violence through community development was not the provincial government's original plan. In 1987, the New Brunswick government established an Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence to coordinate and improve family violence programs and to develop protocols, standards and training for front-line workers. As part of this endeavour to coordinate family violence services, the interdepartmental committee applied for funding from the Family Violence Initiative for a government-sponsored media campaign about family violence. In compliance with the criteria of the initiative's guidelines, provincial civil servants incorporated community development into their public awareness campaign. Although the provincial government was beginning to coordinate its family violence programs, there was a growing recognition, both in government and outside, that ending family violence required a fundamental shift in attitudes about abuse. With increased lobbying from the family violence community, key players in government agreed that the best way to change attitudes about family violence was through local knowledge and involvement. They held a provincial meeting and invited representatives from family violence organizations and community services around the province. They asked community if they would work cooperatively to address family violence through a "partnerships" or community development model.

As a result, the Steering Committee on Public Awareness of Family Violence through Caring Partnerships was formed as a partnership between government and community. The primary purpose in the early days was to raise awareness about family violence. Because it was based on a community development model, the goal of the Steering Committee on Public Awareness on Family Violence was to mobilize individuals in local communities who were interested in ending family violence.

We were trying to approach the public to find out how they viewed the issue. It's fine for us in the government and in certain academic circles to say this is how we see it. But change comes from within and the communities themselves have to consider the issues. We were trying to be a catalyst.

Founding government representative

Creating Awareness of Family Violence: The Evolution of a Collaborative Approach

In January 1995, the committee hired a project co-ordinator with a background as a social worker, for a two-year contract. Her role was to help the communities interested in becoming involved in the community to form effective committees. She offered them resources and information about family violence, administrative support, and encouraged them to find grassroots support to sustain local interest in the project. That year, Woodstock and Shédiac launched pilot projects. Both communities received \$1,500 in seed money from the provincial committee to support their first projects (See Appendix 2 for details about these initiatives).

One of the key challenges the caring communities faced was reaching out to rural communities. The challenge was two-fold. First, the provincial committee needed to mobilize community leaders with enough influence to change attitudes about family violence. Second, the local committees had to develop strategies that would reach out to abused women and children living in isolated areas, but would not alienate constituencies in their community.

Given that we're a rural province, we're only going to make it work through the grassroots, working with small communities and social organizations. We want to work with whomever is out there and concerned about the issues. We've got to make them stakeholders, and make them want to look for solutions. But they have to talk about the problems. Who better to talk about it in their own communities than the local people.

Founding community representative

Organizing the local committees entailed identifying local leaders who would be able to attract representatives from business, service organizations, churches, police, social workers, parents, counsellors, lawyers, town officials, health care workers, teachers, and women's groups. The only stipulation for membership in the initial committees was commitment to addressing family violence issues in their community. Developing a mutual understanding about family violence and the goals of the committee was the first step for each local committee. Based on this understanding communities developed a plan of action. Although many of the grassroots committees limited their activities to public education, several became involved in developing family violence services or programs.

The role of the project coordinator was instrumental. She was free to travel extensively around the province to meet with a range of community organizations and individuals who were interested in becoming involved in family violence awareness. She acted as an advocate for the project and a community animator. She sometimes took minutes for communities during their first meetings, sharing these with them and encouraging them to start the process of documenting their progress.

Finding Funding

Any initiative, especially one that intends to develop tools to motivate and support the entire province in family violence awareness initiatives, needs resources and support. When the Steering Committee on Public Awareness of Family Violence through Community Partnerships was formed in 1993, they worked to develop a funding proposal, which they submitted to the Family Violence Initiative of Health Canada. Health Canada awarded the initiative \$75, 000. As well, the YWCA of Canada made an in-kind contribution of its “No Excuse for Abuse” kit. The YWCA donated these kits, worth \$25, 000, and the committee to distribute them in New Brunswick at various community events. The Department of Justice administered the grant and provided in-kind support for the project. A representative from the New Brunswick Department of Justice served as a co-chair of the committee. The community co-chair was a representative from *Institute Féminin Francophone du Nouveau Brunswick*.

After the three year Family Violence Initiative funding from Health Canada ended, the provincial government relinquished its co-chair and withdrew the in-kind support that had been provided by the Department of Justice. This was in keeping with the stated goal of government, which was to continue to support the initiative, while ensuring that community take over the leadership role and primary responsibility for the committee. Without core funding, the committee entered a transitory period searching for funds to continue its community development efforts. This was a crucial stage for family violence awareness. The entire initiative could easily have ended at that point. However, the community members on the committee agreed that the momentum of the project was just starting to emerge and that to end a project which appeared to have all the elements of success, would be unacceptable.

The committee met and brainstormed over several months and eventually approached the provincial government with a proposal and a budget. In April 1996, in response to this request, the Minister for Family and Community Services approved funding for the Steering Committee on Public Awareness of Family Violence through Community Partnerships for three years while the community based committee was being established and seeking out other funding sources and ways of becoming self sufficient. The funding was provided in reduced amounts in each of the three years. In the first year it allocated \$65, 000; in the second year it allocated \$27, 000 from the Victim Services Fund; and \$25, 000 was provided in 1997/1998. To support the initiative during this transitional period, the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women donated \$2, 500 to the steering committee in 1997; \$500 was to be allocated to each of the five regions in the province.

Stage Two: The Provincial Caring Partnerships Committee (1997- Present)

During the transitional period, it was clear that the committee needed to find a new co-chair to act as secretariat to the initiative. In 1997 the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation (MMFF), which had been a founding member of the committee, agreed to take over this administrative co-chair role that government had formerly held. The community representative from *Institute Féminin Francophone du Nouveau-Brunswick* continued in the other co-chair position and a decision was made to rotate the community chair among the various non-profit organizations represented on the committee.

The committee also decided to take on a new name. They felt that the term Steering Committee seemed to suggest something temporary. Since members had made the commitment to continue their efforts to eradicate family violence through public awareness, they wanted their name to reflect their commitment. One of the communication tools of the committee was a logo, which says “***Caring Partnerships: Communities United Against Family Violence Project***”. Since the initiative is commonly referred to both as “caring partnerships” and “caring communities”, the committee selected “Provincial Caring Partnerships Committee” as their new name.

Unfortunately, the coordinator’s position was terminated in 1997 because the PCPC did not have adequate resources to pay for her salary. The MMFF attempted a fundraising campaign for the coordinator’s salary, but was not able to raise sufficient funds to renew her position. As a result, in May 1998, the MMFF assigned their executive director, on a part-time basis, to undertake many of the administrative support and community liaison activities formerly performed by the coordinator. The committee spend considerable time and effort exploring funding sources, preparing action plans, writing proposals and seeking support and assistance for its work.

In 2000, the PCPC received a \$30, 000 Community Mobilization Grant from the National Crime Prevention Strategy, a federal program of Justice Canada that helps local organizations to develop and implement grassroots strategies to prevent crime and victimization by addressing their root causes at the local level. The goal was to expand the network of “caring communities’ through a community develop approach and to produce communication tools such as newsletters and a website.

Building the Network: The Emergence of Caring Partnerships

Based on the success of the pilot initiatives in Woodstock and Shediac, the caring partnerships network grew and expanded. Most of the caring partnerships were new organizations. In some communities, such as Charlotte County, a family violence awareness committee had already existed, decided to join the provincial network. Each community developed partnerships among local groups, businesses, police/RCMP, service clubs, social agencies, frontline workers, government employees, and individuals who are concerned about family violence. The network comprises thirteen caring communities. Four communities are planning to join the committee. They are Big Cove, Sussex, Rogersville, and Moncton. The current communities are:

- Acadian Peninsula (Tracadie/Caraquet) 1997
- Campbellton Caring Partnerships Committee/Partenaires communautaires 1997
- Charlotte County Family Violence Committee 1996
- Kent Committee Against Family Violence 1997
- Kikahan Committee, Maliseet First Nation at Tobique 1996
- Fredericton/Oromocto Caring Community 1997
- Grand Falls/Drummond/Saint André/Saint Léonard Caring Community 1998
- McAdam Caring Community 1996
- Miramichi Family Violence Partnerships Committee 1996
- Saint John Domestic Violence Community Action Group 2000
- Shediac Beausejour Family Violence Crisis Resource Centre 1995
- Tantramar Caring Partnerships Committee 1996
- Woodstock Caring Communities Committee 1995

Communication Initiatives

During Stages I and II, the provincial committee accomplished one of its key goals, which was to develop communications tools and resources to support the local caring communities. The committee believed that such tools could help grassroots communities to better develop their own outreach and public education skills, while facilitating networking among the caring communities and others. These resources are still available and remain important resources for the community committees. The communication resources and tools include:

- **Community Development Handbook:** introduces the objectives of the initiative and gives new communities suggestions for developing a public awareness campaign based on the experiences of the original committees.
- **Media Guide:** instructs committees how to use the media effectively to get their message out.

- **Reaching In Reaching Out - A Video Production:** features individuals who are involved in anti-violence work and grassroots initiatives to raise awareness about family violence. The message of the video is that individuals have a role to play in ending family violence and that all contributions, no matter how small, are significant.
- **Logo:** a logo was developed that can be used by the committee and all of the caring communities in their family violence awareness work.
- **Newsletter:** provides an overview of the activities of the various caring partnerships communities and about other family initiatives, research and resources in New Brunswick and elsewhere.
- **Caring Partnership Website:** provides general information about the goals and mandate of the committee. PCPC plans to make the website a more dynamic resource for the caring partners by developing a web-based discussion so that representatives from caring partnerships can share ideas. Enhancing the website is contingent on funding.

www.violencepreventionnb.org

- **Networking Conferences:** keep existing caring partnership committees connected and relieves the isolation of grassroots activists working to end violence. The themes of the conferences were:
 - *“A Caring Partnerships Networking Conference”* which was held in conjunction with the “Keeping Our Children Safe Conference” planned by the Fredericton/Oromocto Caring Community (November 1998, Fredericton);
 - *“Preventing Family Violence . . . A Community Response”* held in conjunction with the New Brunswick Crime Prevention Conference (November 2001, Dieppe), organized by the PCPC; and
 - *“Gender, Diversity and Inclusion - Bridging the Paths to Violence Free Communities.”* (November 2003, Fredericton) co-chaired and organized by PCPC and the Mimamichi Family Violence Partnerships Committee

- **The Silent Witness Project:** The PCPC became a member of the Organizing Committee of the New Brunswick Silent Witness Project and is working collaboratively to ensure that the project becomes a province wide initiative and eventually, a national project.³ The organizing partners include: Charlotte County Family Violence Committee, the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation, the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research and the Provincial Caring Partnership Committee. The New Brunswick Silent Witness Project provides an opportunity for several caring communities, as well as many others, such as high schools, to participate in a project that not only has raises awareness about family violence, but also helps heal families. Brings communities together, and strengthen our family violence networks. Because the Silent Witness Project is a travelling exhibit, it raises awareness about family violence across the province. Recently, members of the organizing committee were invited to take the silhouettes to a National Victims Conference in Ottawa (November 2003) and make a presentation to the federal Department of Justice as well. This is another step in the journey towards establishing a national Silent Witness Project.

A project like the Silent Witness Project needs to move across the province so that people learn about the dynamics of abuse. It is a very powerful presentation and if we could present it in every community people may start to understand how violence sometimes impacts individuals and families. It is also something caring communities can put their teeth into and get organized.

PCPC Member

³ The Silent Witness Project began in Minnesota in 1990 as a memorial for women who had been killed in acts of domestic violence. The Project spread across the USA and to several other countries. The first Silent Witness Project in Canada began in 2000 when the Charlotte County Family Violence Committee borrowed the Silent Witnesses from Maine to participate in Family Violence Month activities in November. By remembering the women, the project is a powerful message about the dangers abused women face in their homes. It encourages people to rethink the concept of the home as a safe haven. Currently the project honours twenty-four women who were murdered by their spouses in New Brunswick. The Silent Witnesses, who come from every region of the province and from English, French, and First Nations communities, have had a tremendous impact on the communities and individuals who are involved in their creation and in researching their life-stories. People in communities across the province constructed silhouettes or donated supplies. In the process, many volunteers learned about dynamics of spousal assault and the importance of taking responsibility for ending family violence in their communities. The partners launched the campaign on November 7, 2002, at the Old Government House and the New Brunswick Legislature in Fredericton with the first seven silhouettes. New witnesses have been added to the exhibit since the launch.

Stage Three: Revitalization (Present - Future)

Moving Forward

Currently, the Caring Partnership is in a period of revitalization. Members of the PCPC are committed to the project but acknowledge that over the past few years it has been difficult to maintain momentum at both the provincial and the community level because they have not been able to secure stable funding.

Fundraising and financing has been a priority for the PCPC since the provincial government stepped back from the project. Some committee members are concerned that the PCPC's focus on securing funds has diverted energy from strengthening and expanding the partnership. Yet the committee needs money to carry out its projects. At times, support from caring partnerships has diminished when a community has not been able to sustain momentum once a project is completed. Some communities that have expressed interest in joining the Caring Partnership have decided to wait until the PCPC has secured funding.

It has been challenging to sustain momentum in the caring partnership committees without a full-time community organizer. Although the PCPC has made contact with communities that are interested in joining the network, it has been difficult to launch them without a full-time coordinator. Because PCPC members are volunteers and most have full-time jobs, they have not had enough time to maintain connections with existing caring partnership committees.

The people doing this work are overworked and they're being pulled in ten different directions. That's an issue. People just have too much on their plate.

Caring Partnership Committee Member

While funding has been an important issue, the PCPC has also acknowledged that there are problems with the structure of the committee that hinder the effectiveness of the PCPC as an umbrella organization. The central issue of the revitalization has been how to refocus the provincial committee's attention to community development so that the initiative remains focussed on supporting community projects.

Strategic Planning

During the past year, members of the PCPC have participated in strategic planning workshops organized to revitalize the role of the provincial committee. The committee has met to discuss the strengths and challenges the committee faces. PCPC members have reaffirmed their commitment to a community development model for raising awareness about family violence. The key challenge has been to sustain momentum at the provincial level with limited funding. The committee has acknowledged that the focus on securing funding to develop the network has shifted their attention from developing local initiatives to the structure and function of the provincial committee. In order to refocus the activities of the committee to community development, the PCPC adopted the following two-year strategic action plan for 2002-2004:

There needs to be an environment that says we are trying to listen and to understand. We don't have the answers. Collectively, we might have some sense of what should happen. How do we create that atmosphere?

PCPC Member

- 1. Leadership and Coordination**
 - a. Strengthen infrastructure and capacity of PCPC
 - b. Increase coordination and leadership role
 - c. Strengthen links between PCPC and caring partnerships
 - d. Create new Caring Partnerships
 - e. Maintain strong ties with the Minister's Working Group
 - 2. Stability/Sustainability**
 - a. Re-energize PCPC and Caring Partnerships
 - b. Attain funding
 - 3. Prevention & Education**
 - a. Raise awareness in media
 - b. Share best practices
 - c. Mobilize other organizations to raise awareness
 - 4. Policy & Support Issues**
 - a. Influence social policies on family violence
 - 5. Service Delivery**
 - a. Raise profile of PCPC and the services the Caring Partnerships provide
 - b. Create new programs and services
 - c. Extend Silent Witness Project
 - 6. Accountability**
 - a. Reduce duplication
 - b. Evaluation
-

7. Legislation

- a. Educate Caring Partnerships about new legislation
- b. Share community concerns with the Minister's Working Group and Interdepartmental Committee

This report will not elaborate on all of the elements of the strategic plan. Rather, the report concentrates on the leadership and coordination of the New Brunswick Caring Partnerships, community coordination, and sustainability. The analysis is based on interviews with key informants. However, this report should be a valuable resource since implementation of the strategic plan will involve clarifying the roles of committee members and co-chairs and the relationships among representatives from the New Brunswick government, the MMFF, the community organizations that sit on the PCPC, and the grassroots Caring Partnership Committees. Clarifying these relationships will assist the PCPC to strengthen its role as a catalyst for grassroots community initiatives to raise awareness about family violence.

The Relationship Between the Provincial Government and the PCPC

From the outset of the initiative community members knew that the provincial government's goal was to foster a climate that would promote self-supporting community-based anti-violence initiatives. Even after the first stage of the initiative when the MMFF took over administration of the PCPC, representatives from several provincial government departments continued to sit on the committee and report back to their departments.

The relationship between the government and community representatives has been strained at times. Community members want the government to invest more resources in the committee and may expect government representatives to advocate on their behalf within their departments. However, government representatives work within a bureaucracy and are responsible to their employer.

A lot of government departments moved away once it changed administration to the MMFF. We weren't sure what we had to contribute. We knew inside that this was the support that government was going to give. We had negotiated that, and we knew that that was it. . . . That was the only way we could sell it to government: government would take care of it for a while, and then it would develop itself.

Founding Government Representative

The New Brunswick government has identified the PCPC as a catalyst for change in *A Better World for Women: Government's Response to the Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women*.⁴

Working with the PCPC "to strengthen existing partnerships and to create new partnerships where they do not exist" was one of the strategies the government adopted to contribute to initiatives to end family violence (Government of New Brunswick, 2001). Despite the fact that the

What we really need is sustained funding. Family violence is an issue that's not going away. Start-up money is wonderful, but government can't just hand it off to the community.

PCPC Member

provincial government has recognized the Caring Partnerships as a "best practice", the committee continues to work with limited resources. This has diminished the impact of the grassroots committees in their communities and frustrated the volunteers who remain committed to the project. The PCPC needs financial support from various sources to be an effective liaison between the communities and government. Mobilizing communities into action is one step, but some community representatives argue that the government cannot rely on volunteers to own sole responsibility for raising awareness about family violence.

⁴This report, released in December 2001, outlines the provincial government's Strategic Framework to address violence against women.

The Relationship Between the MMFF and the PCPC

The current structure with the MMFF acting as a permanent co-chair and a rotating community chair requires clarification. The MMFF, with its high profile and commitment to eradicating family violence, is an important partner in the initiative. The MMFF also has established networks provincially and nationally. However, there has sometimes been confusion between the community co-chair and the MMFF. Some community representatives feel that the MMFF has not been able to provide the level of administrative support that the PCPC expected would be provided since funding from this initiative was allocated toward the Executive Director's salary.

Co-chairing needs to be more clearly defined. Each individual will see things differently. That's ok, but the committee as a whole needs to know where its' going.

PCPC Member

This is fundamentally a *structural* issue. Since 1997, the MMFF executive director has been responsible for the administration of both the MMFF and the PCPC. Each position should be a full-time job. There has not been enough time or resources to visit struggling caring community committees or to help establish new caring partnership committees. There is consensus within the committee that the initiative requires a full-time, co-ordinator dedicated to PCPC, who will be supported by the executive director of the MMFF. The coordinator would take over the responsibility of acting as a liaison between the caring communities and the PCPC.

The Relationship Between the PCPC and the Caring Partnerships

Ideally, the PCPC hopes to secure funding to hire a coordinator to liaise with and motivate the communities. Because it has been difficult to secure funding, especially for a salary, the committee has also discussed alternative ways to improve the relationship between the provincial and local committees. The PCPC has discussed strategies to refocus its energies from the committee itself to working as a catalyst for community mobilization. One proposed strategy is for each committee member to take responsibility for liaising with one caring community. The committee member would serve as a "mentor" and link between the PCPC and the local caring partnership, providing the community with the support and information it needs to develop projects and ensuring that feels a part of the family violence network of communities.

We need to strengthen ourselves so that we have a structure in place whereby we have direct communication with each and every caring community with an agreement that they will keep in touch with the PCPC.

PCPC Member

The Relationship Among the Caring Partnership Committees

For the network to be effective, the Caring Partnership initiative needs to be in contact with each other rather than relying on the PCPC to be the primary conduit for communications. Conferences open the dialogue but sustained communication between the conferences will help to sustain energy and promote cooperation among the committees. Enhancing the website, for example, permitting on-line, real time inter-community discussions of issues and strategies, would greatly facilitate the work and collaboration of the caring partnership committees. Successful projects could serve as an example to other caring partnership committees. Mentor relationships among the caring partnership committees would also make the communities a catalyst for change, which has always been the purpose of PCPC.

We need to start moving on a mentoring program from one community to another to truly show that the Committee is not the powerhouse of the project.

PCPC Member

Conclusion

Representatives from the government and non-governmental organizations launched the Caring Partnerships Initiative to encourage community-based public education programs designed to prevent family violence. The MMFF took over the program when the government stepped back from the project. At that time, PCPC had developed a network among groups who were working to prevent family violence. Scarce resources have made it difficult for the PCPC to focus its attention on expanding the network and supporting grassroots public awareness programs on family violence. Similarly, many of the caring partnership committees have not been able to sustain momentum between projects. The PCPC has adopted a strategic plan to strengthen the provincial committee so that it can refocus its energy on helping the caring partnership committees to develop public awareness programs.

There is much work to do in order to address the structural challenges the initiative faces. This report looks at what is working well, and offers recommendations for change based on interviews with founding and current members of the PCPC in the conclusion. While the challenges of moving forward have affected the work of the PCPC and the caring partnership committees, the project has been a dynamic family violence prevention initiative. The next section examines the elements of the Caring Partnerships that make it a better practice.

Section IV: An Overview Of Better Practices

This section uses the PRISM tool to evaluate the work of the Caring Partnerships. It presents the findings of the research and examines why this initiative is an effective anti-violence programme in rural communities. The interview asked key informants to discuss the strengths and challenges of the initiative and to identify structural issues that need to be addressed in order for the Caring Partnerships to develop.

Defining and Talking about Abuse

The first lens of analysis is the abuse lens. This lens examines how the program defines violence and how it approaches service delivery. The purpose of the lens is to explore the different forms of violence women and girls face and the connections between power and control and violence.

The caring communities committees are committed to changing the commonly held assumption that violence is a normal and excusable aspect of family life. The PCPC and caring communities share the conviction that ending family violence is a social responsibility and agree on the criminality of abuse. The PCPC has provided the following definition of abuse on its website:

There are many definitions of family violence. They all acknowledge that family violence relates to the abuse and mistreatment of individuals in an intimate or family relationship. The abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, or financial in nature. Family violence happens everywhere and to people from all backgrounds. Women, children and the elderly are the most vulnerable and at risk. All forms of family violence are wrong and many are criminal in nature.

(<http://www.violencepreventionnb.org/english/frames.html>)

The PCPC adopts a broad framework for family violence so that each caring partnership committee is able to develop a definition of abuse that complies with local values and to establish priorities that meet the needs of its community.

The network is built on the assumption that each community is unique and that, consequently, it is impossible to impose a solution for family violence on a community. One committee member describes the committees as the “watchers within their community.” Each caring partnership defines its priorities according to how it perceives the needs of the community. Committee members must first come to a consensus on their analysis of family violence and on their strategies for change. This is often challenging since members are

It's like a dance of diplomacy. You have to know when one door is going to be shut, or when another is going to open. You just move on opportunity.

PCPC Member

recruited to represent various sectors in the community who may not share similar worldviews. Once the caring community establishes its action plan, it must frame its message in a manner that the community will accept. Given the limited resources, the committee must know which venue and media will most effectively disseminate the message.

Research on violence in New Brunswick rural communities has found that a common barrier women and children face is the unwillingness to intervene in abusive families even though the violence is known in the community. The reluctance to speak out against violence is rooted in assumptions about family privacy and the acceptance as violence as a part of family life (Doherty and Hornosty, 2001; HEAR Team, 1997). The PCPC mobilizes community leaders to change these attitudes, and to use their networks to mobilize the community into action. Caring communities make individuals aware of their responsibility to help women and children in violent relationships.

We have had some terrible tragedies in our area and most people have come forward afterward and said that they knew that she was being beaten or that the child was being abused.

PCPC Member

While some caring communities have focussed on raising awareness about the systemic relations that underpin family violence, caring communities tend to focus on how violence manifests itself in interpersonal relationships. The committees challenge the “unspoken parameters about minding your own business” that perpetuate the silence surrounding family violence. In order to open a dialogue on violence in their communities, committee members generally focus on individual stories. These stories can open a deeper discussion about how power and control and a lack of resources prevent women and children from seeking help.

The Caring Partnership initiative recognizes that raising public awareness is only one component of a multi-faceted strategy to end family violence. Women and girls in rural communities need services to help them live violence free lives. In Shédiac and Tobique First Nation, where there were not adequate services for women and girls in abusive relationships, the caring partnership committees there changed their mandates to include direct service provision.

The Caring Partnerships was about communities working to raise public awareness. But if it was going to work, then the government needed to be involved. Legislation, policies, services. You can have all of the public awareness in the world, but things have to change. If a woman in a rural area wants to leave the services should be in place. There’s a gap between what the communities do and the services to back women up once they leave.

PCPC Member

Living in Rural, Remote or Socially Isolated Communities

Another lens of analysis is the rural/remote lens. This lens focusses on the unique needs of women and girls living in rural and remote communities. The lens asks questions about the specific challenges that women and girls face in rural areas. It also seeks to understand the aspects of rural communities that foster community initiatives against family violence

The PCPC must address two contradictory depictions of rural communities. One social construction of rural communities is as peaceful places. This makes raising awareness about family violence in small towns difficult because many people refuse to acknowledge that it is an issue in their communities. At the same time, there is a tendency to depict rural communities as inherently violent. Media often focuses on the gun culture, high alcohol consumption, and low literacy rates to depict rural communities as backwards. Family violence is deemed to be normal in this construction of rural life.

What's really important is that it's not living in the country that is causing the problems. Women love the country. The neighbours are supportive – these are the same neighbours who are gossiping about you, but they provide child care and help with the farm.

Founding Community Member

The PCPC provides caring partnerships with materials to help them discredit these constructions of rural life. It is important not to focus on the negative aspects of rural life because women living in violent relationships value their rural lifestyle. They are reluctant to leave abusive relationships because they do not want to move to the city. By encouraging local committees to explore the root causes of violence, the PCPC gives communities the tools with which to raise awareness about family violence without reproducing negative stereotypes about rural life. Caring communities also tap into the informal support networks that exist in many rural communities.

In communities that are under-serviced, the caring partnership communities must be careful not to raise women's expectations about the services that will be available to her. Education campaigns focus on mobilizing community support for women who do leave violent relationships. Providing non-judgmental support helps her to stay in the community if she wants to. In letters to the committees, abused women have explained that the articles in newspapers and educational programs helped them realize that they were living in an unhealthy relationship and were a catalyst for her decision to leave abusive partners.

Isolation is a formidable barrier for victims of family violence in rural areas. Caring partnerships promote anti-violence initiatives in their communities to ensure that people can access anti-violence services. For example, the Campbellton committee organized a page in its local telephone directory that identifies the resources available to women in violent relationships.

Isolation also has an impact on front-line workers addressing family violence in communities with inadequate resources to provide comprehensive services. The PCPC provides a network among rural and urban communities to share resources, information about government initiatives, and research about family violence. Communication network encourages communities to share effective strategies to raise awareness about family violence. Networking conferences bring together representatives from caring communities every other year. Maintaining the alliance between the conferences has been a challenge because the PCPC and the local communities do not have adequate resources to do so.

Inclusion (feminist/gender/diversity)

This feminist/gender/diversity lens considers how gender, race, class, and ethnicity influence women and girls' access to anti-violence programs. The questions in this lens shift attention away from individual decisions and probe the systemic power relations that limit women and girls' choices.

Feminists have had a strong presence in both the provincial and local committees, but the PCPC does not promote itself as a feminist group. Similarly, not all members of the provincial or caring committees identify as feminists. Provincial and the caring community committee members can use its public awareness program as a platform for drawing connections between family violence and other campaigns promoting women's equality.

The PCPC expressly recruits members to reflect the diversity within the province. The provincial committee has Anglophone and Francophone members. Public documents are published in English and in French and translation is available at conferences. Senior and youth organizations are represented on the committee. First Nations are represented on the PCPC and as caring partnership communities. Committee members not only respect First Nations members' analysis of family violence, but also learn from the holistic understanding of violence that First Nations communities espouse.

We're talking about how it's timely to look at pay equity and how it links to family violence. There may be a need to have a discussion to connect the dots. . . . And maybe the a member on the PCPC hadn't thought of that. You're framing what feminists have known, and what some of the agencies at the table know in a non-threatening way.

PCPC Member

Some committees in very small communities have consider "remoteness" to be the most challenging division within their community. Finding ways to reach out to families living in isolated areas is a challenge. Low literacy rates are also in important issue. The PCPC has utilized the materials and expertise of Public Legal Education and Information Services (PLEIS), a founding community organization, to address this issue. The mandate of PLEIS is to distribute plain language materials to help people understand their legal rights.

The PCPC encourages caring partnership communities to organize committees that reflect the diversity within their communities. Ultimately, recruitment is the responsibility of the caring partnership committees. Similarly, the caring partnerships determine which forms of violence it will address.

One issue that has not received adequate attention at the community level is homophobic violence. While one committee did start to raise awareness about these issues, the committee did not follow through on the campaign because there was not consensus on the committee about the rights of members of the queer community. It is important that the initiative develop a protocol to address conflicts arising about debates about advocacy for vulnerable groups to ensure that project does not perpetuate the power relations that it is trying to change.

Many people talk about reaching the population that lives in the back country and literally do not get to town often. So when they talk about diversity, they are talking about reaching that group who live in remote communities.

Founding Community Member

Addressing Personal and Community Safety

The safety lens examines how programs protect women's and girls' safety when they reach out for help. The questions ask how the organization coordinate their programs with other social services, protect confidentiality, and raise awareness about family violence.

Protecting and respecting women's privacy is the primary safety concern of the PCPC. Lack of privacy is one reason that women in violent relationships are reluctant to reach out for assistance. Many PCPC events do not name "family violence" in the title or promotional material. Instead workshops focus on "healthy families." Caring communities design educational materials that are discreet and easily hidden from abusers.

How do we create and distribute materials so that they are not putting a woman or child or senior at risk? There is thought given to how we work a display booth . . . There are so many wire traps and invisible alarms that she has to cross in order to get to that material. You have to be aware of what her reality is to make sure that the information is accessible to her.

PCPC Member

Studies have shown that women remain vulnerable after they leave violent partners. Research conducted in New Brunswick for the Silent Witness Project found that close to half of the women were murdered after they had left their abuser (Doherty, 2003). One of the challenges committees face is to raise awareness about the dangers that abused women face without making women afraid to leave violent relationships.

The PCPC uses the research conducted by the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre to educate community members about safety issues. Training police about abused women's security needs is a priority in some communities. Representatives from the RCMP sit on the provincial board, and caring partnership communities are encouraged to recruit local police officers to sit on their committee. Ideally, the relationship between local police and the PCPC is reciprocal. Police officers who sit on the committee can relay information from the committee to other police in the area. The committee has access to the educational resources of the RCMP.

Searching for Solutions

The search for solutions is captured in the intervention lens, which examines the elements of effective violence prevention programs, crisis intervention, and follow-up. The goal of the lens is to determine what works and does not work in rural communities in Atlantic Canada. It focusses on how programs tailor their programs to meet the particular needs of their communities, how programs are developed and sustained, and how programs are coordinated.

Prevention through public education is the Caring Partnership's primary form of education intervention. Networking is also crucial because even though the initiative recognizes and respects the uniqueness of each community, there are similarities among them that

shape individual experiences of violence. The network moves knowledge beyond the local level and raises awareness about specific challenges in each community. Individual members of the provincial and local committees also represent the goals of the committee to the organizations, which they represent. The members use the networks of the organizations, which they represent to disseminate information about the Caring Partnerships and to raise awareness about family violence.

We're trying to shift the perceptions of what's acceptable, what's normal.

Founding Community Member

Section V: Case Studies

The following case studies explain how three caring partnership committees have adapted the goals of the Caring Partnership Initiative according to local needs. Each case study provides an overview of the history and current projects of the caring community committee. The overview is based on materials provided by the committee and interviews with key staff members. A summary of the interview with staff member follows. Researchers used the PRISM evaluation tool to interview staff. The summary is in bullet form and discusses the barriers women and girls face and the better practices that the caring partnership committee designed to alleviate these barriers. Community researchers led focus groups with women who had used the services of the Kikahan Committee and *Centre de ressources et de crises familiales Beausejour*. A summary of these focus groups is included in these case studies.

*Case Study I: Kikahan Committee, Maliseet First Nations at Tobique*⁵

Overview of Committee

Kikahan is a group of volunteers who are concerned about abuse and healing in the First Nations community of *Negoot Gook* (Tobique First Nation). Kikahan is a Maliseet word for healing. Kikahan was formed in 1996 as a pilot project to create a greater awareness of the issues and solutions concerning family violence from a First Nations perspective. The committee serves both victims of family violence and abusers. Kikahan recognizes and seeks to address all forms of violence including physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, economic, and spiritual abuse, as well as neglect of women, children, and elders.

Kikahan adopts a holistic analysis of family violence. The goal of the Kikahan Committee is prevention, education, and treatment for the following purposes:

- to ensure that abuse and violence are taken seriously in the community;
- to promote positive changes in social attitudes and beliefs about abuse;
- to educate community about the cycle of abuse and how it can be broken; and
- to provide options to victims of abuse and abusers.

Kikahan's projects include public presentations, discussions, and seminars for schools, organizations, and groups, creating links with community events, information and training to committee members, a weekly newsletter, and the promotion of positive community events. The activities of the committee include:

- a victim services worker;

⁵ This section is based on research conducted by Karen Miller and Monique Nicholson. Elizabeth Blaney summarized their report.

- networking with courts and probation to provide educational sessions for offenders; and
- training and supporting the local police and RCMP.

Kikahan's purpose is to educate the community about the different forms of abuse and present positive options for families. The committee focusses on the causes of abuse and works with individuals to help them to confront abuse and deal with the impact of violence in their own lives and in the community. Kikahan has helped many individuals and their families to understand why abuse happens and how to maintain a healthy way of thinking. Holistic in orientation, it has involved representatives from RCMP, the Department of Child and Family Services, Drug and Alcohol Program, Tobique Rehabilitation Centre, Tobique Wellness Centre, Family Violence Prevention Program, Band Councilors, and other concerned community members.

The committee organized a counselling program in 1992. Counselling, like other services, is available to all community members who live in Tobique First Nation. Although the majority of clients are Aboriginal, the program also covers non-Aboriginal spouses. The counsellor would like to see more information distributed throughout the community and the school systems targeting abuse and violence. Ideas include information sessions and a family violence week. The goals of the Family Violence Prevention Program are to increase public awareness about abuse and to decrease the incidence of family violence in the community.

The Family Violence Prevention Program has been running for seven years. The staff is made up of a small number of trained persons. Volunteers, most of whom are concerned family members and friends, are essential because they are willing to be supportive for long periods of time, and are available when staff is not. These services are free to all community members.

Aboriginal culture and traditions guide the programs of the Rehabilitation Centre. All are welcome if they participate in a healing process through ceremony. One such project is Sharing Circles, which provides a healing process for community members through a traditional Talking Circle. Sharing Circles provides an opportunity to listen to community members and to share as one chooses. Sacred Stone People's Sweat Lodges are provided on a regular basis and when requested.

Summary of Interview with Staff Members

1) Defining and talking about abuse

Barriers to talking about abuse at Tobique

- Fear of the abuser knowing that women/girls are seeking help and talking about the abuse.
- Embarrassment of people knowing “their personal business.”
- Women tend to normalize abuse by making such comments as “well he only slapped me.”
- Women hide violence to be strong for the children’s sake. Women do not like to accept that they are vulnerable to abuse and violence.
- Men make excuses for their actions.
- Victims and abusers are blamed through language such as “learned helplessness.”
- The community denies that abuse is happening.
- Assumption that unequal relationships are “normal” relationships.

Elements of better practice in talking about abuse at Tobique

- Encourage women to challenge the general acceptance of family violence. Recognition that abuse is multifaceted; includes any situation where a woman/girl is being threatened, controlled, and/or mentally, physically, sexually, or spiritually abused
- Support groups help participants to challenge sexism and positive actions and beliefs.
- Recognize that addressing family violence is not simply a matter of dealing with current acts of violence, but is caused by the intergenerational cycle of violence.
- Focus on healing, personal growth, and empowerment in any abusive/violent situation.
- Recognize that effective programs will focus on family and community.

The community wants abusers to take responsibility for their actions and the victims to seek help for themselves and families involved as well as the abuser.

Staff Member Kikahan

2) Living in rural, remote or socially isolated communities

Barriers related to living at Tobique

- Women fear that they will not be able to make it on their own.
- Fear of breaking up the family.
- Fear that everyone will know your business and of being the subject of gossip.

Elements of better practice at Tobique

- Social programs provide financial support for education. There are no fees for individual services to community members. Provides individual and family counseling. Provides referrals to the appropriate agency.
- Changing attitudes about family violence that accept it as a “normal” part of family life.
- Programs address women and girls’ physical barriers.
- Arranges evening and weekend sessions.
- Programs are within walking distance for all community members. Committee members make home visits when necessary.
- Arranges meetings with different family members to support the whole family.
- Programs accommodate seasonal work, and members who access employment insurance, and income assistance.
- Incorporates program information into community events. In the warmer season, committee organizes craft fairs where community members are invited to come in for different types of information about mental health, and family violence. Representatives from different fields such as dental, medical, Medicare are on hand to answer any questions.
- Confidentiality is protected. Staff will meet woman in a location outside of the program office area.
- Files are locked; no interviews or sessions are taped.
- Unless participant signs a consent form, files cannot be used against anyone for court issues or statements.
- Privacy is discussed at the beginning of group counseling sessions.
- If the client cannot read or write, a videotape is used to present information.

3) Inclusion (Being sensitive to feminism, gender and diversity)

Barriers to inclusion

- It is difficult to reintegrate into the community.
- Child welfare polices placed children in non-Aboriginal homes; Aboriginal children’s connection to their home communities and families was disrupted.
- Bill C-31 reproduced existing animosities that Section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act created.
- Federal government did not provide First Nations communities with adequate resources to integrate re-instated members.

Respect for women, elders, and children has decreased due to colonization, western civilization, and European influence. Through traditional teachings, offenders are able to identify the root causes of abuse and how to address it. With both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people using the programs, they are able to form bonds that breakdown racism.

Staff Member Kikahan Committee

Elements of better practice in inclusion

- Recognition that women and girls have different needs. There following community resources work together: Drug & Alcohol Abuse Program, Family Violence Program, Individual & Addiction Counseling Services, and Traditional Maliseet Sacred Circle.

- Most clientele are First Nations women and girls because many First Nations women and girls feel more comfortable with only other First Nations individuals in the group.
- Spiritual teachings, circle groups, elders advice are all traditional ways that healing can start for some participants.
- In cases where there may be a conflict of interest, program users are referred to someone else.
- If needs cannot be met in the community, they are referred out to where they can be met.
- Having a program for dealing with violence in First Nations in a First Nations community is part of the social action component.
- Teaches community members about traditional teachings and Tobique First Nation's past and traditional ways.

4) Addressing Personal and Community Safety

Barriers to addressing personal and community safety

- Protecting confidentiality is difficult.
- Women need a place to go with their children.

Elements of better practice in addressing personal and community safety

- The RCMP is called when dangerous situations arise.
- Transportation is available to Transition House.
- Mental Health services are available on request.
- Although victims may have resources, many do not wish to leave home; usually RCMP, family member, or friend takes the offender/abuser out of home.
- Women/girls are briefed on the confidentiality and privacy of sessions.
- Participants are informed about mandated reporting.
- If suicide/homicide information disclosed, the program is obligated to report.
- Pamphlets/brochures are left in public places
- Information about programs is disseminated effectively by word of mouth
- Referrals from psychologists, drug and alcohol, probation services, and community information sessions.

A woman was in court fighting a rapist and the women's group went [to court] to support her. The judge saw that this was more serious than before. The women did have an impact on the courts decision.

Women and girls feel safer and more secure talking with someone within the Aboriginal community; someone with whom they are familiar and who they know can understand and relate to their situations.

Staff Member Kikahan Committee

5) Search for Solutions

Barriers to the search for solutions

- There are few financial supports for individuals
- Family pressure to keep family together.
- Lengthy court processes deter women. This causes women to minimize their experiences.

We need continued support by the local elected Band government and by the provincial and federal governments to continue to provide services and social programs to target abuse and violence in both Native and non-Native communities.

Staff Member Kikahan Committee

Elements of better practice in the search for solutions

- Information dissemination through Internet, conferences and workshops, and schools.
- Group sessions are popular.
- Gender differences are observed in discussion topics.
- First Nations community-based programs are more likely to be accessed by Aboriginal women and girls.
- Long- and short-term friendships come from participants who have used services.
- Kikahan committee adapts existing programs to suit the needs of the community.

Summary of Talking Circle with Women Who Have Experienced Violence

The focus group session was adapted to reflect traditional Aboriginal practices. A Talking Circle was organized wherein each person had both a chance to speak and an opportunity to listen to others. In the Talking Circle people were able to speak without feeling ashamed or feared being judged. The process is itself a form of healing.

For this circle, the PRISM tool was adapted to suit the talking circle. The circle leader did not follow the PRISM interview schedule. Instead, the women in the Talking Circle spoke about their own realities and experiences of living with abuse and violence and how they work to the prevent family violence. Each woman spoke about the interconnectedness of different forms of abuse and violence. Each woman spoke about the importance of giving back to the community. They work to raise awareness, to prevent family violence, and contribute to the healing and treatment of abuse and violence in the Tobique community.

The session started with an overview of Kikhan and the Family Violence Program in Tobique First Nation. The facilitators explained the PRISM project and its purpose to research abuse and violence in the lives of women and girls living in remote/rural areas.

The women in the Talking Circle were eager to share their stories. The Elder of group talked about the lack of programs available to her when she was a young wife in an abusive relationship. She remembered, "Back then we didn't know were to go." She told a story about how her husband abused her when she was pregnant: "Dragging me around, biting my legs . . . When you're a wife, you think you have to take it. You made your bed." She left the abusive relationship because she feared for her and her children's safety. She returned to university because she decided that she wanted to help others and her own people. In her words: "By helping others, I helped myself." Since then, she has been involved with various organizations and programs such as Kikahan and the Drug and Alcohol program within the community.

After the Elder's story, the other women in the Circle began discussing their own lives and the violent and abusive situations in which they found themselves. The Talking Circle was very emotional. The youngest woman spoke about being sexually abused at a young age. She talked about trying to hide her situation. She felt ashamed and was scared no one would believe here if she disclosed the abuse. She recalled, "It's a hard thing, it brings back a lot of bad memories. Like opening a can of worms." She said that she often wonders if the abuser remembers the violence. She said that she still did not trust anyone and "didn't want to bear [her] soul." To this day she says her mother has no idea of what happened to her; only her sister knows about the abuse. She then spoke about an ex-boyfriend who kidnapped their young daughter. Through community support and a women's shelter in the United States. She found her daughter, who now lives with her. All the women in the room sympathized with her story because they were mothers.

One woman spoke about being abused sexually by a family member as a young girl. She said, "I felt like a bad girl and that it was my fault." She talked about being in the residential schools and about the abuse she and other Native children suffered while there. She recalled, "We were all scared, afraid to tell. We felt like we were in a prison." She turned to substance abuse at an early age and was in abusive relationships. Now she is going through her own healing process. She shared how she confronted one of her abusers in another Talking Circle, telling him "you hurt me and I want you to know that. But I can forgive you now." Today, she is instrumental in the development of a program proposal to help residential school abuse survivors.

The session ended after about an hour and half because of prior commitments from some of the women.

Case Study II: Centre de ressources et de crises familiales, Beausejour *Domestic Violence Program*⁶

Overview of the Committee

In 1995, the *Shédiac et régions unie contre la violence familiale*, one of the pilot projects for the Caring Partnerships Initiative, changed its mandate from raising awareness about family violence to organizing much needed services in the region. It opened the *Centre de ressources et de crises familiales Beausejour* (Beausejour Family Crisis Resource Centre) in 1998. Its mandate is to raise awareness about family violence, to support victims of family violence, and to provide other services to families in crisis. While the Centre does not serve only abused women, many of the clients are victims of spousal assault. It is a bilingual service but the majority of the clients are francophone. The Centre serves Shédiac, Cap-Pelé, and the rural area from Shemogue to Cocagne. The federal and provincial governments provide short-term project grants, but to stay open the centre relies on fundraising and donations from the community, individuals, private organizations, social clubs, and businesses.

The partnership with other local organizations and grassroots support from the community are the key to the Centre's success. A representative from the centre also sits on an inter-agency committee that meets annually to coordinate services in the area. There are three full-time and one part-time staff and forty-five volunteers. Eleven volunteers are trained to work on the 24-hour crisis intervention team. The team works with the RCMP to help victims of spousal abuse.

The Centre adopts a multi-service approach to assist families in crisis. It organizes services and refers clients to other resources in the community. The Centre's services include:

- individual consultation;
- self-esteem courses;
- anger management courses;
- Victim Services Program sponsored by the Department of Public Safety; and
- support groups for female victims of domestic violence.

Its client base includes victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, individuals suffering from stress and/or depression, individuals considering suicide, parents who are having problems with their children, and couples in the process of separation or divorce. All of the services are free.

⁶This section is based on research conducted by Adèle David.

Although the need for services that addressed domestic violence was the impetus for the Centre, the organizers adopted a multi-service approach so that women would feel more comfortable using the service. Since the centre is not associated exclusively with domestic violence, women are less concerned that people who see them there will assume that they are in a violent relationship. Some women go to the centre to ask for advice about other family issues in order to get information about domestic violence.

To date, the centre has handled 3,700 cases; 487 of the cases have been for domestic abuse, and 95% of these cases have involved spousal abuse. On average, each client has required two to three interventions. After three interventions, the client is referred to a support group organized by Centre or another community agency.

Summary of Interview with Staff Members

1) Defining and talking about Abuse

Barriers to talking about abuse in Shediac

- Community continues to deny the seriousness of spousal assault.
- Many people do not believe that spousal assault is a serious issue in their community.
- Many people believe that domestic violence incidents are isolated.
- Many women believed that they provoked the violence because their spouses told them that they did so.
- Few people in the community are aware of the dynamics of spousal assault.
- Many people in the community do not know what the centre does despite its public awareness campaigns.

Moi je suis étudiante 3e année en service social et je ne connaissais pas le cycle de la violence avant de venir ici en plus je viens de la communauté.

Staff Member Beausejour FVRC

Elements of better practice in talking about abuse in Shediac

- The multi-faceted service protects women's confidentiality and is an effective outreach program for women who are not comfortable seeking advice about abuse. Support groups and individual counselling help women understand the dynamics of family violence and to realize that they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Public education programs raise awareness about the unequal power relations that perpetuate family violence.
- Partnerships with government and community organizations help to educate the community about domestic violence.
- Inter-agency committee coordinates services for victims of domestic violence.
- Best approach to abuse is education and programs for young people to increase their awareness about violence.

Une femme peut venir consulter pour son adolescent alors qu'il y a un problème de violence conjugale.

Staff Member Beausejour FVRC

2) Living in rural, remote or socially isolated communities

Barriers related to living in Shediac

- Economy of the region depends on the fishing industry, which is precarious.
- Many people are seasonal workers.
- Closest services are in Moncton and few people know what services are available to them or how to access these services.
- Many services in Moncton are available only in English.
- Transportation is not provided and there is no public transportation in the area.
- Some who need to go to Moncton for services cannot afford the transportation.
- Centre does not have adequate resources to provide childcare.
- No support groups for abused women from May to December; individual counselling or self-esteem groups offered at this time.

Elements of better practice at Shediac

- Resource Centre is local service and has support from the community.
- Intervenors are from the community and are familiar with local social and economic realities women face.
- Service is discrete; it is not exclusively for abused women so women feel safer going to the centre.
- Centre offers a safe space where women can talk about abuse.
- Services are free.
- Support groups are offered during the day to minimize childcare issues.
- Support groups for abused women are offered from January to April to accommodate women who have seasonal employment in the fishing industry.

3) Inclusion (Being sensitive to feminism, gender and diversity)

Barriers to inclusion

- Centre does not have programs for lesbian women or for immigrant and refugee women because there are few women from these communities living in the area. It will provide short-term individual counselling and refer them to services in Moncton.

Elements of better practice in addressing inclusion

- Centre adopts a feminist approach
- Zero tolerance for any type of violence against women and girls.
- Support groups encourage women to become independent.
- Participants identify their own needs.
- Participants in support groups decide what they will discuss.
- Centre supports women's decisions.
- Services are offered in French and in English.
- One staff member is a previous client in the abuse program, and helps to identify the needs of women and girls in violent relationships.

Il est important de respecter le rythme et les choix de la cliente qui participe au programme.
Staff Member Beausejour FVRC

4) Addressing Personal and Community Safety

Barriers to addressing personal and community safety

- It is difficult to maintain confidentiality in a small community.
- There are few other services dealing with family violence in the community; clients must go to Moncton for services.

Elements of better practice in addressing personal and community safety

- Provide a welcoming and secure environment.
- 24-hour crisis line so women do not have to come to the centre for help.
- Clients chose the method of communication that will minimize their risk.
- Reports do not contain specific information about clients.
- Services are confidential.
- Centre advises clients about resources in the community to help her protect herself.
- Centre maintains a good relationship with the police.
- Police responding to domestic violence calls must refer women to the centre or justify his or her decision not to do so to a superior.
- No confidential information is discussed on cell phones.
- Brochures are distributed in strategic locations and posters promote the centre.
- Centre organizes awareness campaign for Family Violence Prevention Month in November.
- Centre has credibility; agencies send clients there.

5) Searching for Solutions

Barriers to solutions

- There are not enough resources to run support groups all year
- The support group is the only resource available to the women because there are few people in the community to whom they can talk about violence.

Elements of better practice in search for solutions

- Women and girls identified the following as important elements of programs and services:
 - someone to talk to;
 - support for their decisions;
 - education and awareness about abuse and different forms of violence;
 - identifying the resources available to help them make their own choices.
 - Support groups help women - but are not offered all year.
 - Support group is often the only resource available to the women because there are few people in the community to whom they can talk about violence.
 - Offers awareness program to young people; one staff wants to develop programs on healthy relationships.
-

Summary of Focus Groups

Five women participated in different focus groups. The focus groups provided an opportunity to study service delivery and the evolution of the program. The women answered thematic questions and talked about both the positive and negative aspects of the program.

Theme One: Abuse

What is it about his program/initiative that made it useful for dealing with/understanding abuse and violence?

- Women did not feel isolated
- Learning about the cycle of violence and different forms of violence.
- Women could exchange ideas about violence.
- Women learned that there are alternatives to violent relationships.
- Service did not judge or blame women.
- Women learned about the service from female friends, publicity for the centre, or community resources.

J'ai réalisé que les hommes n'étaient pas tous comme ça . . . pas contents!

J'ai été dans une deuxième relation violente et celle-là a duré 6 mois au lieu de 12 ans.

Focus Group Participants

Theme Two: Being a Woman or Girl/Cultural and Social Life/Being Different

Did you find the program/initiative sensitive to the kinds of issues you deal with on a daily basis?

- The support groups and programs emphasize seriousness of violence against women.
- Women did not feel alone, and learned about the extent of domestic violence.
- Helped women make choices that helped them to live independently.
- Helps women make choices.
- Women still suffered abuse after they left their abusers; the isolation continued after the relationship had ended.
- Women live in poverty when they left a violent relationship.
- Women live with the abusive because they don't want their children living in poverty.

Tu cours pour sauver ta vie, tu peux pas aider tes enfants à l'école. Les professeurs savent pas et ne comprennent pas . . . Il faudrait avoir quelque chose pour les enfants, pour les aider.

J'allais mettre ma fille sure le ch'min.

Focus Group Participants

J'avais été voir avant de sortir de chez-nous et on m'avait dit que oui je pouvais recevoir de l'aide. . . . Un coup sortie de la maison . . . j'ai été chez ma mère, mes enfants couchaient dans le plancher . . . je pouvais pas rester là, finalement j'ai dû demeurer à l'hôtel avec mes enfants pendant deux mois car je m'étais fait dire que je ne cadrais pas pour de l'aide financière j'avais fait \$20.00 de trop durant l'année a cause do mon impôt que l'on avait pas calculé.

Focus Group Participant

- Welfare regulations are too strict. Women recommended the following changes to social welfare programs:
- a welfare officer who serves only women who are in violent relationships;
- a school program for children that involves the women who have left violent relationships;
- a place where women can get clothing, household goods, etc. when they flee a violent relationship; and
- a food bank that is available throughout the month for those leaving violent relationships.

Theme Three: Living in a Rural and Remote Area

How is the program/initiative sensitive to the fact that you live in a rural or remote area?

- Support groups help to alleviate loneliness.
- Transportation and baby-sitting costs made it difficult to attend the support groups.
- The support groups were very important for the women, but the program needs more funding to meet their needs.

Theme Four: Feeling Safe

What important ways did the program/initiative address your personal safety?

- Women learned about the service from a friend, the centre's publicity, and from community services.
- Women felt that the centre provided a secure environment.

Moi, j'étais fière d'avoir une place, je me sentais en sécurité.

Focus Group Participant

Theme Five: Solutions

How did the program/initiative help you to understand and deal with violence and abuse?

- Some women still feel embarrassed about being a victim of spousal assault. Some women worried that others in the community might find out that they had been in a violent relationship.
- Women appreciated that there was a place where they could go to talk about the abuse.
- The presence of the centre validated women's experiences.
- The presence of the centre helped women prove to their families abuse is a serious issue.
- Women wanted programs for children in school to help them through the transition.
- Women suggested that many women who needed the support group did not come because they did not identify as abused women. Changing the name of the domestic violence program may encourage more women to come.

Mon fils a raté sa première année parce que je pouvais pas l'aider.

Focus Group Participants

Case Study III: Miramichi Family Violence Partnerships Committee⁷

Overview of Committee

The Miramichi Family Violence Partnership Committee was organized in 1996 to “create and promote a safer environment for all citizens of Northumberland County by raising awareness about the prevention and reduction of family violence.” Northumberland County is one of the most rural counties in New Brunswick and there are numerous barriers, including social and geographic isolation, that make it difficult to get information and assistance to people living with violence in their personal relationships. The goal of the committee is to promote ongoing education on family violence in the community and to work with local media to raise awareness about family violence. The committee is composed of representatives from government and community-based organizations working on family violence issues. The committee acts as a network for the various organizations involved in direct service provision to victims of abuse.

Since 1996, the committee has organized a variety of events to open a dialogue on family violence. A travelling art exhibit raised funds for the Miramichi Emergency Centre for Women. In 1998 the committee organized a march and family picnic for family awareness day. The Committee also entered the Loggieville Days Parade. These events helped to raise the profile of the committee in the community. Workshops include:

- youth ending the cycle of violence;
- child sexual abuse;
- art therapy workshop for survivors of abuse;
- internet safety; and
- presentations on family violence in rural communities outside of Miramichi City.

The committee wants to build on the sense of community in the region and encourages community members to sit on the committee but has not been successful in recruiting members who are not affiliated with professional organizations. Nevertheless, it organizes events that have involved community members. One example is the December 6th Vigil in which boys from the lower middle school participated. Before asking the boys to march in the event, the committee conducted workshops on family violence in the schools. The boys’ participation in the event drew positive media attention. More important, the public education programs seek to end the cycle of violence by teaching boys that men do not have the right to be abusive. Similarly, testimonials by women who have left violent relationships demonstrate that it is possible to survive an abusive relationship.

⁷ This section is based on research conducted by Dr. Deborah Doherty who also summarized the research transcript.

Summary of Interview with Committee Member

1) Defining and talking about Abuse

Barriers to defining abuse in the Miramichi

- Community minimizes abusive behaviours.
- People often blame the woman and women often accept the blame.
- Many people think it is not a widespread problem.
- Many people think that family violence is only physical abuse.
- Few people in the community are aware of the dynamics of spousal assault.
- Many people in the community do not know what the centre does despite its public awareness campaigns.

It's a small community so if a woman goes to [a family violence event] and someone sees her there, then they're going to think that her husband's beating her. Or the husband's saying to her "oh don't you go participate in that picnic or that event...because people are going to think that I beat you."

Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

Elements of better practice in talking about abuse in the Miramichi

- The committee's public education activities are based on a very broad and comprehensive definition of family violence, which helps people to actually identify abusive behaviours. Public education is always anchored in the dynamics of power and control.

What is so important is that women need to hear other women talk about their experiences so they don't feel so embarrassed.

Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

- Through workshops and other events, have tried to deal with a variety of topics, such as woman abuse, employment equity, child abuse and so on.

2) Living in rural, remote or socially isolated communities

Barriers related to living in the Miramichi

- Economy of the region seasonal and many people unemployed.
- Literacy levels are low.
- People know one another and there is tremendous shame and embarrassment for a woman to admit that she is experiencing abuse.
- Dealing with diversity - English, French and Aboriginal communities have different needs.
- Many families are extremely isolated - victims may feel trapped.
- Lack of services, especially therapy for women and children.
- Transportation is always a problem.
- Poverty is a significant barrier - there's no housing, few jobs, so women often prefer to return to the abuse.
- Guns in rural households are another concern - women, children and pets are threatened.

People make excuses for family violence because of conditions in rural areas...they might say "there's high unemployment and people are losing their jobs and they're just really stressed..."

Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

Elements of better practice in the Miramichi

- The public education campaign let's victims know they are not alone - that they should not feel embarrassed.
- We encourage people to feel that it is okay to speak out and name abusive behaviours.
- No matter what, we never blame the victim or make excuses for the abuser.
- The service providers on the committee are from the area and know they the economic and cultural realities of abused women in this community.
- Although family violence events are public, the service providers work very discretely to make women feel safe and informed.
- Through public education activities, members are often able to refer women to safe spaces to talk about abuse.
- All of the public education events, workshops are offered free.
- Partnerships among the service providers on the committee help to connect victims of family violence to resources that might not happen at a formal level.
- Committee members are willing to act as advocates for better services and responses.

We are aware of the economic realities and we know women are isolated. We are looking at it. and we're getting better all the time. I feel that the committee's come a long way. We still have a long way to go, but I think our awareness and willingness to do whatever we can is important. We keep trying to identify the needs...and to get people to come forward to work with us.

Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

3) Inclusion (Being sensitive to feminism, gender and diversity)

Barriers to inclusion

- Rural communities can be very conservative - women often seen in subservient role - following the lead of the man.
- May not support gays or lesbians who experience violence.
- Committee has not focussed on systemic issues such as poverty
- Have not developed any information specifically for lesbian women or youth.

I'd like to see us doing more as far as that goes, gay and lesbian youth and...addressing native women issues - we could definitely be doing a lot more when it comes to that - addressing diversity.

Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

Elements of better practice in addressing inclusion

- Have tried to reflect diversity in our membership. Members come from diverse backgrounds, including French and English, business people, a retired teacher, and social workers.
- Have worked closely with the Women's Committee organizing International Women's Day activities.
- Participated at workshop on pay equity
- Brought in an immigrant women speaker to talk about her culture.
- Although committee works mainly in English, many of the service providers offer services in French and in English.
- Organize activities for the December 6th vigil such as marches.

4) Addressing Personal and Community Safety

Barriers to addressing personal and community safety

- In a small community many people know where the shelter is
- Victims are discouraged from seeking help because of lack of privacy and confidentiality - everybody will know, including the abuser.
- Few services in the community means women are very vulnerable when they leave which is the most dangerous time for them
- Many people have police scanners and they always know who had is in trouble.
- Lack of housing for women leaving violent relationships is a major problem

Elements of better practice in addressing personal and community safety

- Put pamphlets and stickers about the transition house around the community in strategic and safe places, like banks, Tim Horton's, and women's washrooms.
- Women can safely get information from places the abuser wouldn't think about.
- Transition home will arrange to bring a women who has no transportation to help so she won't have to call the neighbours.
- Police are changing the way they communicate so that people cannot pick up their conversations on the scanners.
- All of the member agencies that deal with clients are able to share information about family violence with individual clients in safe environment and make referrals or advises about resources in the community to help her protect herself.
- The police/RCMP are members of the committee and they offer advice on safety.
- Public education explains that leaving abuse is very dangerous time. Encourage victims to get a cell phone to call police in emergency.
- Lots of PR during Family Violence Prevention Month in November.

I think that that's another important part of why the committee's so crucial is because we've got representatives from almost every agency in the area. So those people go back to their agencies and raise awareness just by talking in the coffee room or by bringing up a subject or bringing up something that we're doing with the committee or....that's another vital part of it, of those agency people being part of the committee.

Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

5) Searching for Solutions

Barriers to solutions

- Ordinary, community people who should be speaking out are not joining the committee or taking action
- Resources and services for victims are so limited
- The transition house does not meet every woman's need for safety, confidentiality and support.
- So many other competing needs.

We need to recognize those people more. I don't think we recognize those people. And if their superiors are going to recognize them and talk about it, then that will encourage other people in that agency to become more active.

Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

- Failure to see how poverty and other problems are linked to family violence.
- Lack of support for at the senior levels of agencies for those on the front line who are working daily with victims of abuse.

Elements of better practice in searching for solutions

- Keeping the issue front and centre - not allowing the lack of resources to shift family violence to the back burner
- Working collaboratively among ourselves to identify needs and find ways to meet them
- Speaking out whenever possible - writing letters to the chief of police, to newspapers, to service providers who have minimized the experience of a victim.
- Continuing to support victims and validate their experiences.
- Staying connected with PCPC and the other communities so we feel supported and motivated and learn new practices.
- Keeping government and community aware that there is an ongoing need for better programs and services for abused women especially in rural areas.
- Attempting to involve young people in the issues and recognizing the many people in the community are impacted when one family is experiencing abuse.
- Building trust and promoting healthy relationships and always encouraging community involvement.
- Making presentations to potential donors, such as Service Clubs, Women’s Organizations, Church groups, unions, and so on. Not only are these groups who then donate to family violence work, they are better educated about the issues.

Hopes and dreams for the future

- A family violence centre in the Miramichi that works with children who witness violence.
- People who are specifically trained to understand and deal with family violence in a coordinated way.
- More community involvement in the search for solutions.
- First Nations members on the Family Violence Partnerships Committee who can teach us more holistic ways of dealing with family violence and more culturally sensitivity as service providers when we do work with Aboriginal women and children.
- Support groups for very young children to show them healthy, positive living.
- Better services, particularly mental health and counseling for mothers and children.
- The elimination of shame and guilt for people who are experiencing violence and abuse.

I want to see programs for men. I'd like to see groups for men. I'd like to see the community treating family violence holistically.
 Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

Section VI: Conclusion and Recommendations

Convincing individuals that they have a role to play in helping women and children in violent relationships is a crucial component of family violence prevention. Based on the community development model, the Caring Partnership initiative has mobilized communities into action across New Brunswick. In communities with an active caring partnership committee, more individuals feel that they are stakeholders in ending family violence. Local education campaigns have attempted to counter the widespread assumption that family violence is a private matter and an individual problem.

One of the reasons for the success of the initiative is that it builds on the informal support networks that exist in rural communities. Each caring partnership community develops public education programs that are sensitive to the lack of confidentiality and the need for more services in rural and remote areas. Strategies for changing the perception that family violence are based on local knowledge. While the caring partnership committees acknowledge that family violence is a social problem that requires systemic change, each committee develops public education programs that accord with local values. This strategy cultivates support for the initiative from the community. Basing prevention programs on the positive aspects of rural life also helps the committees reach out to women and children who are reluctant to leave violent relationships because they are afraid they will be compelled to move to an urban centre.

This report has used the PRISM evaluation tool to identify the strengths of the Caring Partnership Initiative as well as areas where the project could be strengthened. The analysis was based on the files of the PCPC and the caring partnership committees and interviews with members of the provincial committee to examine the strengths and challenges of the Caring Partnerships Initiative.

I do find people minimize it. They might say, "it's just because she's such a nag, maybe, or she just overreacts to things, or it's not really that bad, she needs to get help." We help them understand victim blaming.

Committee Member Miramichi FVPC

Following the PRISM evaluation tool, the key strengths of the initiative are:

Defining and Talking about Abuse

- The definition of abuse includes all forms of violence.
- Communities develop an understanding of family violence based on the values of their community and develop a strategy for change that will have the most impact in their community.
- The caring partnership committees and the PCPC focus on the systemic nature of violence. The programs do not treat family violence as an individual issue.
- Public education programs raise awareness about the dynamics of family violence and teach community members to recognize that supporting women and children in violent families is a community responsibility.

Living in a rural, remote or socially isolated community

- The caring partnership committees strengthen networks among people working in family violence issues both within and among communities. These networks reduce the isolation of front-line workers and volunteers engaged ending family violence.
- The committees value rural life.
- The committees work with the informal support networks that already exist in their communities.

Inclusion: Being sensitive to feminism, gender and diversity

- PCPC members represent the diversity of the community.
- The caring partnership committees include First Nations, Anglophone, and Francophone communities.
- The education programs explain the connections between family violence and other women's equality issues.
- Resource material is bilingual.

Addressing Personal and Community Safety

- The caring partnership committees focus on healthy families and self-esteem to protect the privacy of women.
- The caring partnership committees are aware of the lack of privacy in small communities and distribute their material discretely.
- The public education programs focus on the need for services for women and children leaving violent relationships. Some committees have initiated services.

Searching for Solutions

- The network helps Caring Partnerships share information about family violence as well as effective strategies for raising awareness about the issue.
- Caring Communities find that they can mobilize resources and services for victims of family violence by networking rather than staying in their individual silos.
- The central message is that family violence prevention is a social responsibility.

Visions for Change

The PCPC members interviewed for this report recognize that better practices are constantly evolving. Thus, the committee needs to adapt in order to strengthen the Caring Partnerships initiative and meet its current challenges. The future of the initiative depends on expanding the network and strengthening the relationships among the provincial committee and the current caring partnership committees. To meet these goals, this report offers the following recommendations:

- **Expanding the network**

- **Recommendation 1**

The PCPC should secure funding to hire a full-time, bilingual community co-ordinator. The position will be an autonomous role, and will receive in-kind support from the MMFF. The responsibilities will include:

- serving as a liaison between the PCPC and caring partnership committees;
- developing new caring partnership committees; and
- public speaking to promote the New Brunswick Caring Partnerships.

- **Sustainability**

- **Recommendation 2**

The PCPC should continue to seek funding from various sources. Core-funding would facilitate the development of the network

- **Leadership**

- **Recommendation 3**

The PCPC should clarify reporting relationships between the co-chairs, among the caring community committees and between the coordinator and the caring community committees. Clarification of these relationships will help the provincial committee to refocus its attention to developing strategies to support grassroots initiatives to raise awareness about family violence.

- **Recommendation 4**

The New Brunswick government has recognized the Caring Partnerships as a catalyst for change in ending violence against women (*A Better World For Women: Government's Response to the Minister's Working Group on Violence Against Women*). The PCPC should play a proactive role in helping the New Brunswick government implement its strategic plan to end violence against women.

- **Communications**

Recommendation 5

The PCPC should do more to foster lateral connections among the caring partnerships committees rather than through the PCPC. This can be achieved through a range of communication media including:

- newsletters with contributions from caring community committees and members of the PCPC;
- an enhanced website that includes an intuitive on-line community-networking application enabling real-time discussion groups among the caring community committees (The PCPC is currently seeking funding for this initiative);
- Sharing of better practices among caring communities who are involved in the Silent Witness Project; and
- annual networking conferences.

- **Diversity**

Recommendation 6

Caring communities seem to recognize that they are not addressing diversity in their programs and awareness campaigns. The PCPC could play a leadership role in raising awareness about a variety of cultural and systemic factors that perpetuate violence including, racism, ageism, and homophobic violence and the unique dynamics of violence in same-sex relationships.

Appendix I: PRISM Evaluation Tool

The five lenses of analysis in the PRISM Evaluation Tool, and the questions that we ask in relation to each of the lenses, are:

I The Abuse Lens

PRISM adopts the feminist conviction that violence against women and girls is about power.

It is not easy to talk about abuse in this context, though.

1. What makes it difficult to talk about violence against women and girls in rural communities in NB?
2. How is violence minimized? How is violence normalized?
3. Do rural communities in NB tend to blame women and girls for the abuse?

Defining Family Violence:

5. How does the PCPC define violence against women and girls?
How do the communities define abuse?
Are there discrepancies between the definition the Provincial committee adopts and those of the communities?
6. How does the PCPC address the different forms of violence?
7. Do the committees focus on interpersonal relationships?
Do they focus on systemic relations? How
 - poverty
 - racism
 - sexism
 - colonization
8. What is it about how the PCPC initiative defines and talks about abuse that makes it a “key element” of a “better” practice?

II The Rural/Remote and Socially Isolated Lens

Women and girls in rural communities have unique needs. This lens considers how “better” practices work in rural communities. We want to better understand the specific barriers women and girls living in small towns face. We are also interested in the capacity of communities

1. What values, attitudes, and practices support women and girls who have been abused?
-

2. What attitudes and practices make it difficult for girls to seek support?

3. Access to resources and transportation can be barriers for women and girls.

How have the community committees addressed these needs?

- public transportation
- child care
- fee for service

4. Are the committees responsive to the economic realities of the area?

5. Many women in rural areas have said that women and girls are uncomfortable going to programs because they are afraid that everyone will know, including the abuser. How does the PCPC address this fear?

6. How does the committee address issues related to social and geographic isolation of

- First Nations women
- New Immigrant and refugee women and girls
- women and girls from religious minorities
- women and girls with disabilities
- women and girls who cannot read English or French

What is it about how the PCPC has addressed issues relating to rural and remote communities that make it a “key element” of a “better” practice?

III The Inclusion Lens (Feminist/Gender/Diversity Lens)

This lens examines how organizations understand social inclusion, and what measures they have taken to ensure that the diversity of the community is reflected in programs addressing violence against women and girls.

1. How does the PCPC define inclusivity?

Can you think of local initiatives that have addressed issues of diversity?

2. How do the committees address the specific needs of:

- women and girls with disabilities
- women and girls with low literacy rates
- women and girls who speak neither English nor French
- First Nations Women/girls
- lesbian/bisexual/transgendered women/girls
- New immigrant women/girls
- senior women
- women and girls from various faith communities.

3. What kinds of things are done to make women feel more comfortable?

4. How does the committee address social inequality?
 - What is the committee's philosophy of the root causes of violence/abuse?
 - Does the committee address issues of sexism, racism, classism, ableism, homophobia? How?
 - Does the committee have a social action component?
5. What is it about how the committee addresses diversity and equality that makes it a "key element" of a "better" practice?

IV The Safety Lens

Safety is a social responsibility. Safety relates to women's personal safety, safe spaces in the community and a feeling of community safety and security.

1. How does the PCPC raise awareness about the particular safety needs of women around the following issues:
 - guns
 - distance
 - farm and work related accidents
 - women's and girls well-being/mental health
 - physical health related to poverty
 - affordable housing
 - safety plans
 - scanners
 2. Is there a need to protect privacy? How?
 3. How does the committee provide information to women? – to the community?
 4. Where and how are materials distributed?
 - raise awareness
 - make sure women and girls are not at risk
 5. Does the PCPC work with women's groups? How?
 6. Is there anything that the PCPC does to ensure safety that we have not covered?
 7. What is it about how the PCPC handles Safety that makes it a "key element" of a "better" practice?
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V Intervention Lens (Searching for Solutions)

Ending violence against women and girls requires coordinated multi-levelled approaches that involve a search for solutions to individual, institutional, and social change.

Getting the word out:

1. How is the committee advertised? Is it by word of mouth?
 - How does the committee raise awareness about the community responsibility for supporting abused women?

Assessing effect:

2. What are the most effective aspects of the PCPC? Why?
3. Are there any changes that should be made?
4. Does the committee involve victims and survivors? How? Do you get feedback from them?
5. Is the PCPC suitable for other rural areas? Why or why not?
6. How is the program connected to other groups?

Individual and social intervention/transformation:

7. How does the PCPC support women to recognize and deal with other social issues that might help them deal with abuse in their lives?(Housing, education, law, health and welfare, training)
8. How does the committee raise the community's awareness about the relationship between women's access to social programs and the perpetuation of family violence?
9. Are there any constraints that make it difficult to raise community awareness about violence?
10. How does the committee promote individual and social change?

Sustainability:

11. How does the PCPC sustain itself?
12. Has the PCPC changed over time? How?

Vision:

13. What are your hopes and dreams for the PCPC?
 14. What needs to happen at local/government levels for the committee to achieve these goals?
 15. What is it about how the PCPC handles intervention that makes it a "key element" of a "better" practice?
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Appendix II: Pilot Projects

Woodstock Caring Communities Committee

The Woodstock Caring Communities Committee launched its campaign on 27 April 1995 at the Carleton Civic Centre. The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain, New Brunswick's Lieutenant Governor, was the guest of honour for the event.

The Woodstock Caring Community Committee's goals were:

- to increase awareness of family violence issues and solutions and to facilitate greater access to useful information about abuse, services, and the resources available in the community;
- to foster community participation and ownership of the issue and solutions;
- and to promote self-help skills to enable individuals to deal with stress, poor mental health, low self-esteem and disharmony in the family by promoting mutual respect for others and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The Committee implemented these goals through various strategies:

- distributing pamphlets about abuse, transition houses, legal advice, and services;
- writing articles about violence for local newspapers;
- forming a Youth Sub-Committee to help youth understand family violence and dating violence;
- holding workshops about elder abuse for doctors;
- poster competitions in elementary school to raise awareness about family violence and safety using the Making Waves program to discuss dating violence in high schools;
- parenting workshops with babysitting services;
- raising awareness about teen pregnancy;
- a workshop on media violence;
- the drama club of the high school wrote and presented a play discussing family violence;
- information booths at the Farmers' Market.

In a small community like Woodstock, which is a very religious community, to open the door on domestic violence and what is a healthy relationship by using the analogy of a licence was a huge step. It was a language they were a little more comfortable with. Are they going to take the step to say, "You don't have to stay in that relationship". It may not be going there but at least it's giving permission to talk about violence.

PCPC Member

One initiative developed Woodstock was a card for couples who were about to be married. The card stated, “Your marriage licence gives you the right to love, honour, and cherish one another. It does not give you the right to hit, beat, threaten, berate, or in any way abuse your spouse.” To reinforce this message, the committee submitted articles to church bulletins on Fathers’ Day encouraging fathers to be kind and caring and to volunteer in the community to counter all forms of violence. Working in partnership with Public Legal Education and Information Services of New Brunswick (PLEIS), the Woodstock Caring Community Committee and the Woodstock Interministerial Committee, created a brochure entitled “Getting Married? Before You Say Your Vows, Make Sure Your Home is Loving and Safe” This brochure targeted couples who were considering marriage and advised them to solve abusive dynamics in their relationship before they married. The strength of the campaign was its awareness of what message would work in the community because it would be used in marriage preparation classes by the very ministers who had helped develop it. The message was direct and challenged assumptions about a husband’s right to control family members, but did so in a manner that encouraged healthy family life. The campaign opened a dialogue with clergy, an important step because many women who have a strong affiliation with a church decide not to leave violent relationships because their church did not condone divorce.

While the Woodstock Caring Community Committee made progress raising awareness about family violence in its first year, committee members recognized that limited resources circumscribed their efforts. The committee was concerned about the low attendance at their events and that few community members who were not affiliated with government volunteered to work with the committee. The Woodstock Committee was not alone. Each of the caring partnership communities expressed frustration about the limited resources at their disposal to carry out their campaigns.

Shédiac et régions unie contre la violence familiale

The committee’s original goal was to raise awareness in a predominantly Francophone community. The launch for the *Shédiac et régions unie contre la violence familiale* was on 27 April 1995. Through questionnaires, the committee conducted an attitude survey and needs assessment. They found that the community wanted family violence and counselling services in Shédiac so that people would not have to travel to Moncton for help. In 1996, the committee decided to focus its energy on opening a bilingual resource centre for victims of violence. With overwhelming support from their community, and excellent success in accessing funding, they were able to obtain a home, hire staff and open a new centre called *Centre de ressources et de crises familiales Beausejour* (Beausejour Family Crisis Resource Centre). The Centre has become the organization that is now represented on the Caring Partnerships network.

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