

PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

ACTIONS TO IMPROVE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE IN YEAR ONE (2014/15)

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: PREVENTION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Information about services, programs and supports is available on various websites and not easily accessible at a community level
- Much of the information is not multi-lingual

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS AND PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

Coroner's Inquest Recommendations: Christian Lee

- Ongoing multimedia community-based educational advertising program surrounding domestic violence to be expanded and enhanced
- Family relationships and domestic violence education program be instituted for all students from kindergarten to grade 12

PROPOSED ACTIONS: HIGHLIGHTS

- Update and enhance the provincial government internet website <http://www.domesticviolencebc.ca> to promote public awareness and enhance access to information about prevention, intervention and supports at a community level for victims and potential abusers/perpetrators
- Promote and leverage existing provincial campaigns and websites that aim to prevent or reduce violence in all its forms including *Erase Bullying, Together to Reduce Elder Abuse, Be More Than a Bystander, Violence is Preventable*

INVESTMENT RESULTS/ OUTCOMES:

- Expanded, enhanced and increased access to multi-lingual information for diverse populations (including victims, potential abusers/perpetrators, service providers, general public) will positively impact and influence prevention and public awareness regarding domestic violence

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

- Fragmented system of investigating, responding and supporting victims and perpetrators of domestic violence
- The Settlement sector has identified a gap in terms of domestic violence related information, tools and resources to increase awareness and effectiveness of assessment, reporting and service delivery

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS AND PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

RCY Report:

Honouring Christian Lee – No Private Matter: Protecting Children Living with Domestic Violence

- That MCFD propose required changes to legislation, and develop policies, standards and training to provide social workers with clear direction in assessing the safety of children who are exposed to domestic violence
- That MCFD strengthen services to immigrant women in circumstances of domestic violence
- ...identifying and closing the gaps in policies and practices across government programs and services that touch the lives of children, including child welfare, adult mental health, criminal and family justice systems, police, victim services, education and income assistance

PROPOSED ACTIONS: HIGHLIGHTS

- Review, revise and enhance government policies and resources to improve consistent responses to domestic violence situations involving women, children and families
- Develop and explore partnerships and initiatives that improve access to available, affordable, safe housing for women with/ without children and to better support women with multiple challenges and barriers (mental health, substance use problems etc) who access supports and services
- Develop and implement domestic violence related tools and resources for immigrant and refugee settlement and social service providers

INVESTMENT RESULTS/ OUTCOMES:

- Government wide policies and resources will improve and provide consistent responses to domestic violence situations involving women, children and families and are responsive to their need for diverse supports and services

PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

ACTIONS TO IMPROVE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE IN YEAR ONE (2014/15)

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSE

- Identified need for better communication and decision making regarding domestic violence cases using a specialized approach

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS & PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

RCY Report:

Honouring Christian Lee – No Private Matter: Protecting Children Living with Domestic Violence

- That the Ministry of Attorney General undertake a review and enact necessary changes to improve the administration of justice in criminal matters involving domestic violence, including establishment of domestic violence courts, to better protect the safety of children and their mothers

The Honourable Wally T. Oppal:

Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry

- That police officers be required to undergo mandatory and ongoing experiential and interactive training concerning vulnerable community members:
- Training to ensure an understanding of violence against women in a range of settings including family violence

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

HIGHLIGHTS

- Work with the judiciary and other justice system partners to explore the establishment of a framework for domestic violence courts
- Identify and implement improvements in communications between police and Crown Counsel at the charge assessment stage

INVESTMENT RESULTS/ OUTCOMES:

- Mechanisms that improve communication and decision-making by bringing specialized expertise and processes to bear, will improve the Justice System response for victims and potential abusers/perpetrators of domestic violence

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: COORDINATION, INFORMATION SHARING AND REFERRAL

- Gaps in coordination, information sharing and referral leading to inadequate assessment and response in many cases

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS & PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

RCY Report:

Honouring Christian Lee – No Private Matter: Protecting Children Living with Domestic Violence

- That the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General take the lead in a special initiative that focuses on the issue of safety of children and youth in domestic violence situations, by ensuring a coordinated, effective and responsive system in Greater Victoria and throughout British Columbia

Coroner's Inquest: Christian Lee

- To Solicitor and Attorney General of BC: Special domestic violence units be set up regionally and coordinated with all stakeholders

PROPOSED ACTIONS: HIGHLIGHTS

- Work with the Community Coordination for Women's Safety (CCWS) program to provide ongoing support to coordination initiatives across the province
- Work with the Council to Reduce Elder Abuse (CREA) to address elder abuse and domestic violence directed at older adults
- Explore the provision of access to the Protection Order Registry for Ministry of Children and Family Development delegated staff and delegated staff from Delegated Aboriginal Agencies

INVESTMENT RESULTS/ OUTCOMES:

- Improved coordination, information sharing and referral will help with prevention and reduction of domestic violence incidents

PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

ACTIONS TO IMPROVE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE IN YEAR ONE (2014/15)

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: RESEARCH, TRAINING AND EVALUATION

- ▶ Identified need for competency and capacity building

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS AND PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

Coroner's Inquest Recommendations: *Christian Lee*

- ▶ ...train all involved service providers to a common standard in all criminal justice regions in the province

RCY Report:

Honouring Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon. – Making Their Voices Heard Now

- ▶ That the Ministry of Children and Family Development develop and implement a comprehensive plan to improve the capacity of social workers, supervisors and child and youth mental health professionals to protect and support children who are living in circumstances of domestic violence
- ▶ That the Ministry of Education develop and implement a plan to improve the capacity of school personnel to support and protect children who are living in circumstances of domestic violence
- ▶ That the Ministry of Social Development develop and implement a plan to improve the capacity of the income assistance program to contribute to the protection of children who are living in circumstances of domestic violence by improvements to its services to the families

PROPOSED ACTIONS: HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Develop and publish an on-line training module on recognizing and responding to domestic violence that is available publicly
- ▶ Implement training on indigenous cultural competency to victim support workers across the province
- ▶ Explore partnerships with organizations serving persons with disabilities who are impacted by domestic violence to involve them in research and training to improve understanding and better respond to needs of persons with disabilities
- ▶ Research information/orientation materials will be distributed across the Early Years and Social Services sector
- ▶ Train educators and community partners in violence threat risk assessment community protocols
- ▶ Online domestic violence safety planning training is available to service providers through Open School BC

INVESTMENT RESULTS/OUTCOMES:

- ▶ Increased capacity and competency among professionals will increase effectiveness of working with diverse populations impacted by domestic violence

PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

\$5.5 MILLION NEW INVESTMENT FOR YEAR TWO (2015/16) AND YEAR THREE (2016/2017)

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: DIRECT SERVICES FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN AND MEN

- ▶ There are four integrated Domestic Violence Units*: Vancouver, Greater Victoria, Abbotsford and New Westminster
- ▶ The integrated teams involve police and community-based victim services and in 2 units – child protection workers

*Capital Region Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU) won a Premier's Award (2013) for Promoting Innovation and Excellence in the Partnership Category

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS AND PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

RCY Report:

Honouring Christian Lee – No Private Matter: Protecting Children Living With Domestic Violence

- ▶ *That the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General take the lead in a special initiative that focuses on the issue of safety of children and youth in domestic violence situations, by ensuring a coordinated, effective and responsive system in Greater Victoria and throughout British Columbia*

Coroner's Inquest into the death of Christian Lee, Yong Sun Park, Kum Lee Chun, Moon Kyu Park & Hyun Joon Lee

- ▶ *To Solicitor and Attorney General of BC: Special domestic violence units be set up regionally and coordinated with all stakeholders*

D. Geoffrey Cowper QC Report:

A Criminal Justice System for the 21st Century

- ▶ *The new Provincial Office of Domestic Violence, working collaboratively with the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Council, should prepare a plan to reduce domestic violence, including an integrated and cross-sectoral approach that includes an informed role for the victim, diversion if appropriate, and early resolution, timely hearings, innovative sentencing, and transparency in the goals and progress towards achievement*

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ \$1.0 MILLION investment to assist the start up and implementation of Domestic Violence Units (DVUs) across the province that will intervene in domestic violence cases and provide direct services to victims, children and perpetrators of domestic violence

INVESTMENT RESULTS/OUTCOMES:

- ▶ Increase in number of DVUs provincially
- ▶ DVUs utilize co-located service delivery to improve outcomes for victims and children at high risk of lethal domestic violence
- ▶ They typically consist of police, victim service workers and child protection
- ▶ As of September 2013, the RDVU has had 328 cases referred, resulting in 124 guilty pleas, 13 convictions, 10 peace bonds, 24 files in which charges were not laid or dropped, 6 acquittals and 1 civil peace bond. 186 of those cases involved children
- ▶ Over 60% of these files involve children, indicating the immense need for child welfare involvement
- ▶ An evaluation of this unit in 2012 revealed that no children were removed or taken into care while they were involved with the RDVU
- ▶ With the creation of new DVUs, more families at high risk will receive enhanced services and supports from these integrated units

PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

\$5.5 MILLION NEW INVESTMENT FOR YEAR TWO (2015/16) AND YEAR THREE (2016/2017)

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: DIRECT SERVICES ABORIGINAL CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

- ▶ Children Who Witness Abuse programs serving children (general population)
- ▶ Limited direct supports and services for Aboriginal children, youth and families on and off reserve
- ▶ High incidence of domestic violence incidents and homicides in Aboriginal populations compared to general population

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS & PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

The Honourable Wally T. Oppal: *Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*

- ▶ **6.3** – *That Provincial government provide additional funding to Aboriginal women's organizations to create programs addressing violence on reserves, so that fewer women and youth are forced to escape to urban areas*
- ▶ **6.4** – *That Provincial Government provide additional funding to Aboriginal women's organizations to provide more safe houses and counselling programs run for and by Aboriginal women and youth*
- ▶ *Mapping gap analysis identified lack of culturally relevant prevention and intervention programs on and off reserve*

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ \$2 Million investment for development and delivery of programs specifically for Aboriginal women, men, children and youth who have been or are at risk of being impacted by domestic violence (includes potential abusers/perpetrators)
- ▶ Programs will reflect best practices and will be delivered by First Nation communities, Métis agencies and Aboriginal organizations
- ▶ The investment will support hiring to deliver direct services to victims, children and perpetrators of domestic violence in communities

INVESTMENT RESULTS/OUTCOMES:

- ▶ The Government of BC has made a commitment to a new relationship with Aboriginal people that recognizes that the nature of our work as a provincial government has an impact on the Aboriginal people of the province
- ▶ Therefore, the development and delivery of this proposed action will be done in collaboration with Aboriginal communities and an advisory provincial group, from the beginning
- ▶ This action will increase the number of direct services delivered on and off reserve to Aboriginal women, men, children and youth who have been impacted by domestic violence
- ▶ It is projected that increased funding in communities with a high Aboriginal child population will result in the development and implementation of community driven, culturally relevant domestic violence prevention and intervention programs
- ▶ For example, with the development of 10 programs throughout the province it can be projected that more than 500 families will receive direct services from an Aboriginal specific program which will be culturally relevant and community driven

PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

\$5.5 MILLION NEW INVESTMENT FOR YEAR TWO (2015/16) AND YEAR THREE (2016/2017)

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: DIRECT SERVICES FOR PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ▶ Family Violence Prevention Programs for medium and high risk sentenced spousal assault offenders
- ▶ Minimal or no direct services for perpetrators/men prior to entering the criminal justice system

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS AND PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

RCY Report:

Honouring Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon. – Making Their Voices Heard Now

- ▶ Improvements should include: requirements to engage and involve fathers in planning

D. Geoffrey Cowper QC Report:

A Criminal Justice System for the 21st Century

- ▶ In British Columbia, ... yearly domestic violence charges of adults have increased steadily from about 9,000 in 2002/03 to about 12,000 in each of the last three years. The approval rate, for charges submitted by the police, in every year except 2011/12, is between 98% and 99%. The conviction rate for these offences has averaged 49% over the decade, while the average for non-domestic violence cases has been 70%
- ▶ Mapping gap analysis BY PODV has confirmed minimal or no services provincially for men (prevention and support)

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ \$1 Million investment to provide direct services for perpetrators of domestic violence prior to potential involvement with the criminal justice system
- ▶ The investment will support the delivery of direct services to domestic violence perpetrators or potential abusers

INVESTMENT RESULTS/OUTCOMES

- ▶ This action will provide for direct services for perpetrators of domestic violence prior to potential involvement in the criminal justice system
- ▶ Therefore, this action will occur within the social/human service sector and outside of the criminal justice system
- ▶ An evaluated, evidenced based program will be implemented across BC to provide support and intervention to perpetrators or potential abusers to hold them accountable and support change in behaviour and attitude
- ▶ Australia, the UK, Canada and the U.S. have evaluated programs that are suited for implementation in BC. For e.g. The Australia Freedom from Fear Campaign hosted a Men's Domestic Violence Helpline. In the first 21 months (Sept '99-May '00) over 6000 calls were received. A total of 2,543 self-identified as perpetrators or men 'at risk'. 1,352 accepted a voluntary referral into men's behaviour change (counselling) programs

PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

\$5.5 MILLION NEW INVESTMENT FOR YEAR TWO (2015/16) AND YEAR THREE (2016/2017)

CURRENT STATE:

Focus Area: DIRECT SERVICES RURAL/REMOTE COMMUNITIES

- ▶ A range of services for victims and children located in larger and more urban communities across the province
- ▶ Limited access to transportation, supports and services in rural/remote areas in comparison to larger and more urban communities
- ▶ Safe Home program staff serving smaller rural communities often has to travel long distances to provide services to women with and without children

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION FROM REPORTS & PODV MAPPING PROJECT INCLUDE:

The Honourable Wally T. Oppal: *Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*

- ▶ To develop and implement an enhanced public transit system to provide a safer travel option connecting the Northern communities particularly along Hwy 16
- ▶ Mapping gap analysis revealed serious gaps in rural and isolated community services and programs

PROPOSED ACTIONS: HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ \$1.5 Million investment to support victims in rural and remote communities who have limited access to transportation and social housing options
- ▶ This program will run similar to other BC Housing programs (Homeless Outreach, Rental Assistance Program) and will target communities that have no social housing
- ▶ Transportation will involve supporting women to get to necessary services such as income assistance, court services, or counselling, etc. Other situations involve transporting women with and without children to the safety of a transition house over long distances
- ▶ Funds to support transportation would be managed through Safe Home programs
- ▶ This investment primarily supports direct services to women with/without children

INVESTMENT RESULTS/OUTCOMES:

- ▶ Direct support (rent supplements) for victims of domestic violence in rural and remote communities
- ▶ In 2012, approximately 14,000 women and children were sheltered in a Transition or Safe House
- ▶ This investment will address the needs of hundreds of women who have unsafe or inadequate shelter due to various factors
- ▶ A lift in funds available for transportation will support victims to get to necessary timely services such as income assistance, court services, or counselling
- ▶ Other situations will include transporting victims with and without children to the safety in another community which could be 100s of kms away