

"Building the smallest democracies at the heart of society."
The United Nations: The International Year of the Family, 1994

Agreement# 40063171

Alberta's RESOLVE Research Day 2013 A Success!



by Nicole Letourneau

Over one hundred and fifty people attended RESOLVE's Research Day in Calgary, Alberta on October 21. Attendees represented service providers, researchers, policy makers and administrators from across Alberta, but also Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and the Maritimes. Research Day 2013 hosted 32 presentations in four concurrent sessions and covered a range of topics relevant to the Harvard developmental framework on the origins of lifelong health, which outlines policy and program levers for change, caregiver and community capacities, stable responsive relationships, safe supportive environments and how these all affect health across the lifespan (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University 2010).

Our two keynote speakers were hits, with excellent feedback from attendees. In the morning **Dr. Sandra Graham-Bermann**, a psychologist and researcher from the University of Michigan, spoke about the importance of reducing stress and improving adjustment of abused women and children in her Kids' Club and Moms' Empowerment Program. Results show that the two-generation programs (mothers and children) prevent and treat a host of health problems, including anxiety and depression in children and their mothers and cognitive performance in the children. Her programs are now offered in several languages and in numerous centres in the US, Ontario, and Europe. **Jane Ursel**, **Cheryl Fraehlich**, **Leslie Tutty** and **Meghan Woods** provided an excellent follow up to Dr. Bermann-Graham's presentation, describing qualitative findings from the Healing Journey on *The Link between Childhood Abuse and Intimate*

Partner Abuse. Using a case study approach, the team provided example after example of women's stories of abuse in their family of origin, leading the audience to hypothesize about the intergenerational impact of abuse and of the huge potential to stop the cycle of abuse by reaching out to families and implementing mother-child programs such as those described by Dr. Graham-Bermann. Similarly, **Christine Ateah** spoke about her work with **Joan Durrant** and colleagues in her presentation *Learning on the Parent's Knee: Preventing the Intergenerational Transmission of Family Violence*. She spoke about the internationally-recognized "Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting" program designed to teach parents nonviolent methods of problem solving in conflict with children in a non-prescriptive and non-punitive way. **Kendra Nixon** and **Colin Bonnycastle's** presentation on *Challenging the Notion of Failure to Protect: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Protective Strategies of Urban and Northern Abused Mothers* underscored mothers' desire to protect their children from exposure to violence, which speaks to families' amenability to support intervention.

In the afternoon, Neuroscientist from University
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Healing Journey Findings



by Jane Ursel



When interviews began for the *Healing Journey* study back in 2005, we had a set of structured questions to explore the participant's experience of abuse in their childhood as well as in their adult years. We found that a large percentage of women revealed a significant history of abuse as children. Furthermore, women also recounted the histories of abuse experienced by their abusive partner. Of the 665 women we interviewed, 57% reported witnessing violence in their home as a child. An even higher percentage of their partners (64%) had the same experience. In addition, 71% of the women reported physical or sexual abuse or both as a child and 60% of their partners were also abused as children. In 2007-08, we conducted open-ended interviews with a sub-sample of 92 women, and asked them to tell us about their life in their own words. Many of these women saw a link between their childhood abuse and abuse in adult intimate partner relationships. At the recent RESOLVE Research Day, researchers **Cheryl Fraehlich, Meghan Woods, Leslie Tutty**, and I presented women's accounts of their abuse history.

One theme that emerged was the normalization of abuse through childhood experiences: *"I'm used to it, the abuse. I'm used to being abused all the time, cause I grew up like that."*

In addition, to learning that abuse was normal, women also learned that it was their fault: *"He (father) tried to convince me that my mom's choice to leave was my fault. That if I wasn't such a horrible, horrible child...*

everything would have been okay."

A final lesson was to keep silent: *"I was taught not to challenge what a man said or decided. I did not have a voice as a woman."*

As they approached adulthood, the women often said they were desperate to leave their abusive home: *"That summer when I was 14 I thought, 'well I'm going to look for a husband. I have to get out of here.' So I started searching."*

Adding to the desire to escape was the need to fill a void because women grew up feeling unloved: *"I met him when I was 15 and I just kind of gave my all to him because I wanted to feel love because of the lack of love from my mom and dad."*

Women talked about the familiarity of abuse: *"My father is like my husband. My father is outgoing, a womanizer, and a drunk and that's what kind of husband I looked for."*

For some, there was the fantasy of being rescued: *"I was convinced that there was something magical and I was going to be taken away and things were going to be so much better. I was going to live happily ever after."* But soon the dream became a nightmare: *"I stepped out of one bad situation and into a worse situation and my kids were right alongside me."*

Women saw the linkages between their childhood and adult abuse experiences: *"That's why women who are very loved by their parents don't get so sucked into these holes, 'cause they have something to keep them afloat. But if you don't have any of that, then you are going to drown for sure."* *"It seems like a cycle in my own family, I have six sisters and all of us are each separated from an abusive relationship or there are some that are in a relationship that's still abusive."*

Despite these tragic experiences, it is a credit to the strength and resilience of these women that so many of them found their way out of their abusive relationships and were able to build a safe home for themselves and their children.

We would all like to thank our community partners, **Anna Pazdzierski, Karen Peto, Maria Hendrikka**, and **Carolyn Goard**, who guided us in our analysis.



Manitoba Update



by Cheryl Fraehlich and Jocelyn Proulx

November was designated as *Domestic Violence Prevention and Awareness Month* in Manitoba, and a number of initiatives commemorated this occasion. Events involved different sectors of the community, and included government and non-government agencies in different geographic locations within the Province. In recognition of the fact that domestic violence affects everyone in society, and that solutions must also involve everyone in society in order to work together, the activities that marked Domestic Violence Prevention and Awareness Month included and were targeted towards women, youth, and men. Although space prohibits the description of all of these events, below are some examples of what took place.

On November 4, the Manitoba government announced a number of prevention strategies focused on stopping the cycle of violence before it starts. These strategies include partnering with community groups to launch new tools to be used as a part of prevention efforts. One such tool is a poster about healthy relationships distributed to schools, clinics, and community agencies across the Province and which is available online at www.manitoba.ca/stoptheviolence. In a project that involves a partnership between the Province and the **Broadway Neighbourhood Centre**, youth involved in an after-school program at the Centre developed two videos to provide information on domestic violence and healthy relationships. A Government announcement also described increases in funds for programs that are part of the *Family Violence Prevention Program*, and the creation of two new grants for community-based solutions to domestic violence. These grants include one to offer healing programs to Aboriginal women who have experienced domestic violence and another for a community organization to develop initiatives that engage boys and young men in efforts to end domestic violence.

Voices for Non-Violence, a program of the **Mennonite Central Committee of Manitoba**, launched the

Purple Night Lights campaign on November 5. This campaign invites individuals to bring the issue of abuse out of the shadows by lighting a purple candle in a visible area of their workplace, church, organization, or home, which sends the message that those who are hurting are not alone or forgotten.

The **Men's Resource Centre of Manitoba**, a program of **The Laurel Centre**, has now relocated to 115 Pulford Street in Osborne Village in Winnipeg. On November 19, an open house was held at the new location. **Suhad Bisharat**, Executive Director of The Laurel Centre and Men's Resource Centre, and her team expended much time and effort to select and prepare this new facility. The new location for the Men's Resource Centre of Manitoba offers privacy and accessibility to men who seek services related to child sexual abuse, experiences of domestic and family violence, relationship issues, and other personal struggles.

Although Winnipeg is recognized as the capital of Manitoba, there is "life outside the Perimeter" and domestic violence prevention and awareness events took place throughout the Province. For example, **Women's Safe Haven Resource Centre** in Flin Flon began a *Purple Ribbon Campaign* at the beginning of November. Ribbons, buttons and information about domestic violence were placed in displays in various locations within the community and everyone was encouraged to wear ribbons to show support and awareness of the issue of ending domestic violence. In addition, Women's Safe Haven Resource Centre organized a *Take Back the Night* march against violence on November 25. This event invited women and men to participate in the march to reclaim the streets and call for an end to sexual assaults, domestic violence, and other forms of abuse.

Many more events were underway across the Province and we applaud and congratulate everyone involved in planning, organizing, and participating in these events and initiatives. ✂



Saskatchewan Update: Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions to Violence



by Tracy Knutson, Provincial Coordinator, STOPS to Violence

Partnerships and collaboration are key to strengthening communities, and **Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) to Violence** works to build on those foundations. As a provincial network of individuals and organizations that includes government, community, public and private sectors, STOPS to Violence is uniquely positioned to bring people together to identify issues and find solutions. “Our commonality is our desire to reduce interpersonal violence and abuse and to build healthy, vibrant communities where all people are safe and valued,” explains **Tracy Knutson**, STOPS Provincial Coordinator. Through partnerships STOPS encourages the use of ideas, environments, and opportunities to address issues of interpersonal violence and abuse.

STOPS to Violence has been active in Saskatchewan for over 20 years, with the belief that shared conversation between stakeholders helps identify solutions and take action, which results in greater success than independent actions by each sector. The “STOPS process” focuses on active participation, that builds consensus, and values every individual’s contribution. Through this process, we engage a wide diversity of people from across the Province to build and improve connections and relationships through events, promotion, and shared information. Our members participate in events and activities that help build and ‘recharge’ skills and knowledge, which generates energy to enhance their own work and allows them to be part of an active growing network that creates change in Saskatchewan.

STOPS has developed several resources, one of which is the “Community Connections Plan”, a tool that helps provide direction to communities to develop a consistent, coordinated, and effective response to

interpersonal violence and abuse. The Community Connections Plan provides tools and information for communities and individuals to take action and provides support for victims and survivors of violence and abuse. STOPS has also recently released a revised version of “Getting Out – A Process Learned from the Courage and Wisdom of Survivors”. This guide can be used by anyone who experiences an abusive relationship to recognize the abuse and to plan how to stay safe, leave the abuse, and rebuild once they have left. The guide provides information about organizations and individuals available for help, along with an “Escape Planner” checklist.



Through our bi-weekly eBulletin, STOPS to Violence distributes local, provincial, and national information related to funding opportunities, events, professional development, success stories, and emerging issues to over 450 individuals across the province.

Knutson emphasizes that STOPS to Violence welcomes all who have an interest in addressing interpersonal violence and abuse. “Whether you are a paid staff member, a volunteer, a grandmother staff—anyone—we invite you to join us. We believe in the power of individuals and communities to affect positive change and, by coming together, we can leverage the strengths, knowledge, experience and passion that Saskatchewan people are known for.”

To learn more about STOPS to Violence, refer to www.stopstoviolence.com, e-mail stopstoviolence@sasktel.net, or call 306-565-3199. ☞

Alberta Update: *Reaching for A Good Life: A Program for Men Who Batter*



by Ann Marie Dewhurst, Ph.D., & Karen M. Nielsen, Ph.D.

In 2007, the **Reaching for a Good Life** program was developed to address the needs of men who had engaged in abuse within their families but who were not involved in the criminal justice system. We planned the program based on the underlying beliefs of the *Good Lives Model*⁶ of offender rehabilitation. From this perspective, abusive behaviour occurs because people use the wrong means to reach their goals, have a lack of scope about what a good life might be, and have a conflict of goals and/or lack the capacity to manage life without the use of abuse. This program is designed to offer men the opportunity to receive feedback through its four phases, which includes orientation, intake, group modules, and a post-program evaluation. Each group module is self-contained and lasts four sessions.

Orientation sessions give the men an experience of what group might be like and what might be covered in the program. Those who wish to continue complete a battery of psychological and attitudinal tests, including the *Personality Assessment Inventory*, *Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function*⁴, and the *Aggression Questionnaire*¹, after which they are invited to an individual intake session. These tests are also completed post group and at follow-up.

Feedback from the tests is provided at the intake session, and the men are encouraged to create a good life plan based upon their personal goals and needs. A specially designed histogram that describes ten potential areas of living that contribute to a good life is used to develop their plan. They rate their priority goals and current satisfaction in each area, and return to this histogram to review their progress on a regular basis throughout the program. At this point, the men are then invited to begin the group program. They can join the group at the beginning of any one of the modules.

Participants at each group session complete the *Outcome Rating Scale* (ORS)³. They rate how well they have been doing in terms of personal well-being, family and close relationships, work, school and friendships, and a general sense of well-being. Group therapists review the ORS results as the group session begins, and use that feedback to guide or focus group discussions.



At the end of each session group participants complete the *Session Rating Scale*³, and rate the relevance of each session to their journey, the respect they felt from the facilitators, the comfort they had with the group format and their general satisfaction

with the session. Low scores are noted immediately by the therapists and the participant is consulted on their feedback and clarification is sought about how to improve the group experience in upcoming sessions.

Quantitative analysis of the pre- and post-test scores and follow-up data shows that the group has facilitated positive change in many individualized areas, and that these changes are maintained. We found significant improvements in self-regulation and significant reductions in hostility and aggression. We also learned that participants appreciate the reflective nature of the tools. They are interested in the feedback process and report that it is helpful to review how they are doing in life. The consistent focus on reflection and feedback also provides positive role-modeling for participants.

Doing client-informed group therapy requires commitment to the process on behalf of the therapist. Clinical supervision is critical to supporting the group therapists in being responsive and creative to meeting client need and vigilant regarding client risk management. ❁

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College London, **Dr. Eamon McCrory**, told us all about the neurobiology of exposure to family violence. Dr. McCrory performed double duty by also presenting at Pediatric Grand Rounds of the Alberta Children's Hospital earlier in the day. He told us that children's brains light up in the same areas that soldiers' brains do when these soldiers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from active duty in war zones. The most intriguing finding was that while children's brains appeared similar to PTSD soldiers' brains, the children were asymptomatic. In other words, the children exposed to abuse did not display or report experiencing any depression, anxiety or behavioral disturbance. Dr. McCrory made us all ponder the future for these children: Could the brain evidence suggest that there is a latency period between violence exposure and later mental health and behavioural problems? Importantly, Dr. McCrory tied his presentation into Dr. Graham-Bermann's in suggesting that early intervention with these children along with support for their mothers may make the difference between early exposure to abuse turning into emotional and behavioural struggles in the children as adults.

Numerous presenters also spoke about supporting men to overcome violence in their relationships. In two separate presentations, **Karen Nielsen** and **Ann Marie Dewhurst** described the *Experiences of Men Completing the Reaching for a Good Life (RFGL) Program* for men who sought to

become nonviolent in their relationships. Check out our Alberta Update for more details and their great results! **Liza Lorenzetti** and **Vic Lantion** presented on *Engaging Men and Boys in Domestic Violence Prevention: Opportunities and Promising Approaches* and identified seven entry points

for violence prevention work with men and boys. These entry points include engaging fathers, focusing on men's health, using sports and recreation, considering work and peer relationships, engaging men as allies with women and girls, and Aboriginal healing. Similarly, **Alexis Zederayko** presented on *Experiences of Men Who Have Chosen to Become*

Non-Abusive After Perpetrating IPV, and pressed the audience to consider the importance of asking formerly violent men about their change process toward becoming non-violent.

Thanks to everyone who made RESOLVE Research Day 2013 such a success. Future Alberta articles in this newsletter will highlight these and other presentations from Alberta. ☘



Conference attendees (left to right) **Mr. Rod McKendrick**, Prairieaction Foundation Chair; **the Honourable Sandra Jensen**, Alberta Associate Minister of Family and Community Safety; **Dr. Sandra Graham-Bermann**, Morning Keynote Speaker; and **Ms. Pradnya Khatavkar**, RESOLVE Conference Coordinator.

Announcements, Conferences and Events



November 25 – December 10, 2013 - *The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence.* November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. It marks the first day of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, and December 10 – International Human Rights Day – is the final day. This 16 days of activism is recognized internationally.

Gender-based violence affects us all. It destroys families, weakens the fabric of our society, and takes a heavy toll on our communities and our economy. Canadians are reminded during the 16 Days of Activism that they can take actions, now and throughout the year, to eliminate violence against women and girls in all its forms.

Source: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/commemoration/vaw-vff/days-jours-eng.html

Wednesdays - *Awakening the Wise Women* at the North End Women's Centre, 394 Selkirk Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. This six-week program explores traditional Aboriginal cultural teachings and the Eastern Yogic wisdom of the chakras to heal from violence, trauma and abuse or to increase self esteem. Topics include medicine wheel teachings, elder teachings, and the chakras, among other things. Bus tickets and child minding provided. Registration is required. For information or registration call 204-589-7347.

December 12-13, 2013 - *Family Violence – Working Towards Solutions* workshop presented by the Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute Inc., at the Best Western Royal in Saskatoon, SK. For more information or to register refer to www.ctrinstitute.com/wkshops.

April 24-26, 2014 - *Intersectionality Research, Policy and Practice: Influences, Interrogations and Innovations* conference hosted by the Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy (IIRP), at Simon Fraser University's downtown campus in Vancouver, BC. The conference will prioritize recent theoretical developments and debates, interdisciplinary perspectives, critical assessments, methodological advancements, research, policy and practice applications, and work in the creative arts. For more information refer to www.sfu.ca/iirp/conference/index.html.

DECEMBER 6

IN REMEMBRANCE

AND RECOGNITION

In remembrance of all women who have died as a result of violence, and in recognition of the ongoing work of women in the struggle to end violence.

RESOLVEnews is a quarterly newsletter published by RESOLVE Manitoba. Any submissions, announcements and inquiries can be directed to the RESOLVE office in each of the three prairie provinces or to the editor, Ilze Cepelis, RESOLVE Manitoba - phone (204) 474-8965; fax: (204) 474-7686; e-mail: newsedit@cc.umanitoba.ca



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E-mail: info@prairieaction.ca

Web site: www.prairieaction.ca

Prairieaction Foundation 2013 CARE Grant recipients

Calgary Counselling Centre: Long term follow-up evaluation of Women's Domestic Violence Treatment Group. PAF is pleased to provide funding to support a review of the current status of published literature regarding women who are abusive in intimate relationships, along with an investigation of the long-term outcomes of the Responsible Choices for Women (RCW) program which offers support to women abusers.

Canadian Red Cross – Manitoba Region: Evaluation of the Canadian Red Cross Anti-Bullying Program. PAF is pleased to provide funding to assist with an assessment of the Beyond the Hurt (BtH) program, including its effectiveness in training educators and students in disseminating information about bullying in their schools and whether student participants in the program have the skills to prevent and intervene when they witness bullying incidents amongst their peers.

The Laurel Centre (Winnipeg): Evaluating a Framework for a Childhood Sexual Abuse Program for Men. PAF is pleased to provide funding to help the Centre begin evaluating the effectiveness of the program delivered through the Men's Resource Centre for men who experienced childhood sexual abuse.

Prairieaction Foundation 2013 Education & Awareness Grants

Ikwe Widdjiitiwin (Winnipeg): Development of a Medicine Wheel Practice Framework for Training and Education. PAF is pleased to provide funding to assist with the development of a program model and training manual incorporating a Medicine Wheel with provincial operating standards, to provide a framework for day-to-day practice in delivering its services. The training manual will incorporate information on the best policies and practices to ensure culturally appropriate service delivery that addresses the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being of Aboriginal women and their children.

Survivor's Hope Crisis Centre (Pinawa, MB): Preparing youth for strong, healthy and respectful relationships. PAF is pleased to provide funding to assist in the delivery of the SADI program in eastern Manitoba. The SADI Program promotes safety and respect in schools and communities and empowers youth to seek leadership positions in their schools and communities in the prevention of violence. Program topics encourage change in the beliefs and attitudes that support a violence culture. Workshop topics and content are age appropriate and support the learning outcomes for the Manitoba Education: Physical Education and Health Curriculum. ☘

RESOLVE Manitoba

*~ Dr. Jane Urşel ~
Director (Academic)*

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RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

**108 Isbister Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2**

Ph: (204) 474-8965 Fax: (204) 474-7686

E-mail: resolve@umanitoba.ca

Website: www.umanitoba.ca/resolve

RESOLVE Saskatchewan

*~ Dr. Mary Hampton ~
Academic Research Coordinator*

**LC 210, Luther College
University of Regina
Regina, SK S4S 0A2**

Ph: (306) 337-2511 Fax: (306) 585-5267

E-mail: resolve@uregina.ca

Website: www.uregina.ca/resolve

RESOLVE Alberta

*~ Dr. Nicole Letourneau ~
Academic Research Coordinator*

**EdT 416
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4**

Ph: (403) 220-8181 Fax: (403) 210-8117

E-mail: pkhatavk@ucalgary.ca