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The United Nations: The International Year of the Family, 1994*

Agreement# 40063171

No Longer Silent: Meeting the Needs of Persons with Disabilities Experiencing Abuse



by Linda White, Kelli Moorey and Leslie Tutty

Adults and children who are disabled are vulnerable to violence from family members or caretakers in equal, if not increased, rates to that of the majority population. Men and women with disabilities are vulnerable due to public misperceptions of disability, necessary reliance on caregivers, and the nature of the disability. Abuse of all types is widespread: 51 to 83 percent of women with disabilities are sexually abused in their lifetime; 51 percent are physically abused, 66 percent are emotionally abused, and 52 percent have experienced three or more forms of abuse.

Individuals with disabilities face the same systems difficulties as other assault victims, such as service fragmentation and being forced to reiterate their traumatic experiences. In addition, they must deal with existing myths and stereotypes with respect to their disabilities, and barriers such as communication problems, physical access, and intellectual gaps such as access to information when attempting to disclose their abusive/neglectful situations. Sobsey (1994) estimated that those with disabilities are 1.5 times at greater risk for abuse than their non-disabled peers. The number of persons with disabilities in Calgary is significant and growing due to the aging of the population. In Alberta, the population of persons with disabilities is 355,000 (2002). In Calgary, there are 93,675 households, or 28 percent, with the presence of disability (2002).

The **Persons with Disabilities Task Group** of the



Linda White

Alliance to End Violence Society of Calgary recently received funding from the Calgary Foundation and the Prairieaction Foundation CARE Grants to address these important issues. The task group was initiated after a community consultation in 2005 identified the need to build agency capacity to work with persons with disabilities, to raise the profile of the issue of violence against persons with disabilities, and to identify and address gaps in services. Persons

with disabilities who experience violence have been overlooked in the broader community response to violence. Public awareness is limited and there are gaps in service provision and legislation. There is an inconsistent response to disclosures of abuse across sectors and across disability serving agencies.

The Persons with Disabilities Task Group currently consists of **Linda White**, Executive Director of the Alliance to End Violence; **Kelli Moorey**, Community Development Coordinator - Persons with Disabilities Group; **Eva Chan**, Community Development

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Choice? Children and Youth in the Sex Trade



by Jennifer Berry of New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families

It is a commonly accepted myth that children and youth involved in the sex trade have chosen that life. Reality is that these children are being manipulated and sexually exploited because they are vulnerable. Children and youth often report that they are first exploited by an adult perpetrator known to them through family or friends. This adult perpetrator will offer the child or youth food, shelter, clothing, acceptance, love, and belonging in exchange for a sexual act (Scheirich, 2004). Children/youth who are unable to have their basic needs met by their traditional supportive family or extended families are exceptionally vulnerable to being sexually abused through exploitation. Frequently, these families are unable to provide adequate support due to legacies of colonization, racism, gender inequities, poverty, etc.



The myth that children/youth “choose” their involvement in the sex trade becomes apparent when a child’s options are weighed: For many children/youth, their “choice” is actually a survival strategy. Their need for the basic necessities—food, shelter, clothing and love, direct them to their “choice.” A realistic evaluation of child/youth involvement in the sex trade often indicates that there is no real choice.

Investigation into the welfare of sexually exploited children and youth reveals devastating effects on the child’s mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well being. Such effects can only be accurately translated as an extreme abuse of that child.

The sex trade has a very different culture than most of mainstream society and operates with a completely different set of cultural components (cognitive, economic, language, norms/rules, etc.), which regulate that group’s behaviours, thoughts and values. These components are contrary to mainstream cultural norms and expectations. Socialization into these norms under conditions of violence and extreme danger for the child/youth creates a form of traumatic bonding with their peer group and their oppressors. Once a child/youth has been conditioned, or “resocialized” into the sex trade culture, the transition back to mainstream culture is extraordinarily long and difficult.

Existence within the culture of the sex trade is filled with horrific physical and emotional abuses perpetrated toward these children/youth on a daily basis. Sometimes these abuses are perpetrated by the very people that are paid to care for them (police, social workers, foster parents, treatment workers, etc.). Children/youth are often demoralized, marginalized and filled with guilt and shame. These emotions are not theirs to carry or own but nonetheless, they do own these feelings for a very long time. For many children/youth, these feelings linger long after intervention.

The lack of trust in adults is enormous and it can take months, if not years, of consistent, non-judgmental treatment to break through the protective barriers they have created to survive. Often, these children create substance misuse

barriers to numb the trauma they have suffered. Their substance misuse makes their transition process additionally difficult due to society’s views of female alcohol and drug users as sick and deviant (Erickson, et al., 2000). Sexually exploited male children/youth also face a difficult transition process, as they have similar substance misuse issues combined with stigmas associated with sexual abuse perpetrated on males.

No matter how we look at it, these children and youth are victims of abuse. They deserve and yearn for the safety and securities afforded to any other child. All adults have the legal and moral responsibility to intervene appropriately. Intervention strategies include, but are not limited to, the use of provincial and federal legislation; awareness and education; use of culturally competent programming; addressing of systemic gaps; recognition of people who exploit children as child abusers—with appropriate measures taken to prosecute accordingly, etc. Such measures are necessary in order to ensure that these children are protected and provided for in a manner which conveys our belief and perspective that we will no longer blame the victim.

In the February 2009 issue, Jennifer Berry will continue with Part 2 of this article. ❀

Manitoba Update



by Jane Ursel

November is **Family Violence Prevention** month in many provinces in Canada. As a result, it is an extremely busy time for those of us who work in this field. This November, RESOLVE Manitoba hosted an expanded *Research Day*, a national conference in collaboration with the *Canadian Alliance of Research Centres on Violence* and the *Canadian Observatory on the Justice System's Response to Intimate Partner Violence*.

The excitement began with the launch of our new book ***What's Law Got To Do With It?: The Law, Specialized Courts and Domestic Violence in Canada***, edited by **Jane Ursel, Leslie Tutty** and **Janice leMaistre**. Because we conduct our research in collaboration with many community partners, our publications reflect this partnership. The 12 chapter book has 22 authors and we were very pleased that ten of our authors attended the launch at McNally Robinson book store in Winnipeg on November 5.

We sold so many books that night that we made the *Bestsellers* list in the *Winnipeg Free Press* the following Sunday. We were especially pleased that Prairieaction Foundation's artist in residence, **Teresa Posyniak**, whose art work is featured on the cover of our book, flew in from Calgary to attend the launch and the conference.

The next two days - November 6 and 7 - we hosted the National Conference. We had a total of 406 registrants and despite our nasty Winnipeg weather on the night of the 6th, attendance was good. Approximately 350 participants attended on Thursday and a very committed 250 participants braved the sleet and snow to attend on Friday. We were pleased that registrants reflected our community of researchers, service providers and students. There were approximately 150 students over the two days: Some volunteered, some presented and many attended the wide range of sessions offered. We were particularly pleased that our service provider colleagues came from rural and northern Manitoba as well as Brandon, Selkirk and other smaller communities. They presented some very powerful sessions on community mobilization, shelters

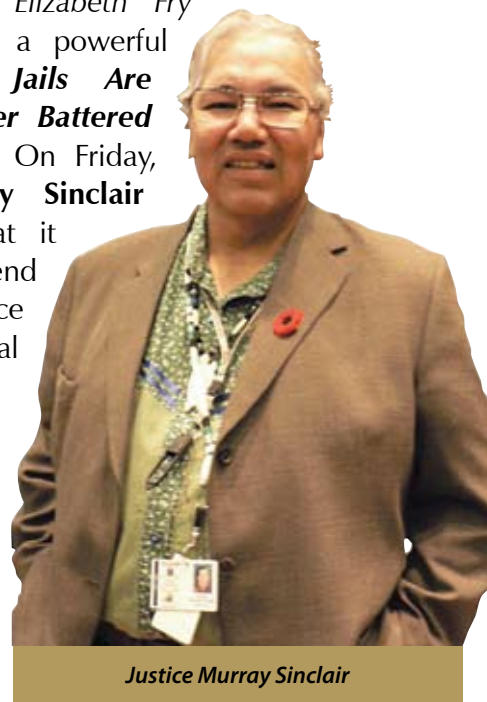
on isolated reserves, and women working to prevent sexual exploitation of their children.

Our international guests from England, Australia and Mexico took the weather in stride and presented compelling papers on issues and programs that addressed interpersonal violence in their countries. Finally, we were happy to have Canadian registrants and presenters from New Brunswick to British Columbia, who shared their research and information on innovative programs in their communities. Thursday's keynote speaker, **Kim Pate**, *Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry*

Societies, gave a powerful talk entitled ***Jails Are Not the Shelter Battered Women Need***. On Friday, **Justice Murray Sinclair** spoke on what it will take to end family violence in Aboriginal communities.

His presentation was videotaped and will be available from RESOLVE Manitoba in early 2009.

Many of our RESOLVE staff ended the week by participating in the second annual face-to-face meeting with our international partners involved in the *Canadian Observatory on Justice System's Response to Intimate Partner Violence*. The week was busy and productive, and we would like to thank the 45 individuals who presented papers at our conference and the hundreds who braved the wicked weather to make our start to Family Violence Prevention month particularly memorable. ❀



Justice Murray Sinclair

RESOLVE Saskatchewan Team Members Present Research at RESOLVE Manitoba Research Days



by Meghan Woods, Jennifer Langille, Holly McKenzie and Mary Rucklos Hampton

In November 2008, **Mary Rucklos Hampton**, Saskatchewan Academic Coordinator of RESOLVE, along with **Meghan Woods**, graduate student in Clinical Psychology, presented *PTSD Symptoms in Relation to Women's Experiences with Intimate Partner Violence*. These preliminary findings describe experiences of 184 Saskatchewan participants (second wave of interviews) in the *Healing Journey* study. The discussion was well attended, and it was rewarding to receive such enthusiastic responses.

Discussion began with focus on how victims of IPV are at greater risk of depression, somatization (physical symptoms with psychological causes), and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; APA, 2000; Carlson et al., 2002). PTSD symptom clusters can be grouped into four categories: re-experiencing (nightmares about a traumatic event or memory flashbacks), hyperarousal (easily startled or having trouble sleeping), numbing (not able to have certain feelings, or feeling detached) and avoidance (not remembering parts of the traumatic event, not wanting to talk about it; APA, 2000; Asmundson, Stapleton, and Taylor, 2004). Most PTSD research has been conducted with military personnel, and more information is needed about groups of PTSD symptoms experienced by victims of intimate partner and interpersonal violence. Preliminary findings from the *Healing Journey* study suggest that symptoms may develop in a way that is unique to victims of IPV (Asmundson, Stapleton, and Taylor, 2004; Krause et al., 2006). Specifically, more research is needed in the association of types of violence, such as categories of violence within IPV, with PTSD symptoms.

This presentation discussed preliminary findings that describe the relationship between IPV, childhood abuse, and other forms of abuse and PTSD symptomatology,

phobic anxiety, somatization, and depression, in a sample of 184 female victims of IPV. We expected that the types of violence participants experienced would be associated with development of certain patterns of psychological and PTSD symptoms. This hypothesis was tested via correlational analyses using data collected as part of the *Healing Journey* Project (SSHRC/CURA, PAF, RESOLVE), for which **Dr. Jane Ursel** is the principal investigator. To measure somatization, phobic anxiety, and depression, we used a short form of the Symptoms Checklist (Cano and colleagues (2001), and to measure PTSD we used the PTSD Checklist (Blanchard et al., 1996; Weathers et al., 1993). All participants had experienced IPV, and scores on the Composite Abuse Scale were used to measure four dimensions of IPV: emotional, physical, harassment, severe combined (Hegarty, Bush & Sheehan, 2005; Hegarty, Sheehan, & Schonfeld, 1999).

We found that participants experienced more severe abuse than participants in other studies. Other experiences of inter-personal violence indicate that 75% of the women reported experience of some sort of childhood abuse; 73% of the participants reported having sex against will; and 58% reported being physically forced to have sex. Although the prevalence of PTSD in our sample was lower than expected (14% of the women would qualify for a diagnosis of PTSD), we found that severity of abuse was strongly related to development of PTSD symptomatology.

Our sample findings show that increased severe combined abuse is associated with increases in all PTSD symptoms, as well as phobic anxiety, depressive symptoms, and somatization. Childhood abuse was the only form of abuse that was strongly associated with numbing and hyperarousal symptoms. Having sex against one's will and being forced to have sex were associated with increases in re-experiencing, avoidance, and numbing as well as increased somatization and depressive symptoms. Research results indicate that type of inter-personal and intimate partner violence experienced is linked to development of certain symptoms, which may have implications for treatment for women who have experienced these types of violence. ☘



Research Days 2008

Alberta Update



by Leslie M. Tutty

The article *Do good intentions beget good policy? A review of child protection policies to address intimate partner violence*

written by **Kendra Nixon**, now at the University of Manitoba, University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work academics **Leslie Tutty** and **Christine Walsh**, and former RESOLVE Alberta Research Associate, **Jill Weaver-Dunlop**, has been selected as a finalist in the **Herbert A. Raskin Child Welfare Pro Humanitate Article Awards** from the *North American Resource Centre for Child Welfare*. The awards are presented to authors who “exemplify the intellectual integrity and moral courage required to transcend political and social barriers to champion best practice in the field of child welfare.” The winner will be announced in January at the *International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment* in San Diego.

The article originated from a policy review commissioned by the *Alberta Research Centre for Children, Families and Communities* and the *Alberta Ministry of Children and Youth Services* as a follow-up to the **World Conference on Family Violence** held in Banff in 2005. The article was published in 2007 in Volume 29 of the journal *Child and Youth Services Review*. The article examines how child exposure to intimate partner violence is incorporated within child protective legislation and policies in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Given the high rates of intimate partner violence in Alberta, intervention to protect victims and children exposed to this form of family violence is critical. So too is the need to understand the ways in which child protection policies and legislation serve this function. The review raises a cautionary note for the need to assess the unintended harms of child protection policies and legislation, and includes the potential to further victimize abused women and their children, overwhelm already overburdened child protection systems, and the failure to hold the perpetrator accountable.

Other nominees include well known academics from across North America who work in the child welfare field.



Other RESOLVE Alberta News

Sarah Anne LeDrew, BA, left RESOLVE in the fall to start graduate work in Applied Psychology at the University of Calgary. Sarah had contributed to several RESOLVE Alberta projects, including the *Evaluation of Saskatchewan's Programs for Children exposed to Domestic Violence*; the evaluation of the *Who Do You Tell* teacher training; and the *Needs Assessment for Persons With Disabilities who have been Abused* project. We wish Sarah the best in her future endeavours



Kelli Moorey

Kelli Moorey, who worked with RESOLVE Alberta on the *Disabilities Needs Assessment* for about a year, has been hired as Project Coordinator on two Alliance to End Violence projects: the *Persons with Disabilities Task*

Team and the *Action Committee on Bullying and Harassment*. Fortunately, we will continue to work with Kelli in her new position.

New staff members include **Lisa Ondejko** (PhD student social work), **Choni Tenzin** (MSW student), and **Jöelle Robichaud** (undergraduate student working on the *HomeFront* evaluation).

Other available completed reports (please email tutty@ucalgary.ca or resolve@ucalgary.ca) include:

Tutty, L., LeDrew, S.A. & Abbott, P. (2008). **An evaluation of Saskatchewan's programs to address children exposed to domestic violence**. Final Report to Department of Justice Canada Victims of Crime Initiative. Calgary, AB: RESOLVE Alberta.

Tutty, L., Ogden, C., & Weaver-Dunlop, G. (2008). **An Environmental Scan of Strategies to Safely House Abused Women**. Final Report to the Calgary Poverty Reduction Coalition. Calgary, AB: RESOLVE Alberta. ☘

“No Longer Silent” cont'd from page 1

Coordinator – Older Adults, Alliance to End Violence; **Maggie MacKillop**, HomeFront; **Carol Fredrek**, Multiple Sclerosis Society; **Karen Bannick**, CNIB (Vision Health, Vision Hope) Regional Supervisor, Client Services, **Chad Goebel**, Community Living Network Coordinator, Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary; and **Leslie Tutty**, RESOLVE Alberta. **Karen Walroth**, the previous Executive Director of the Alliance to End Violence, was also a key contributor to this initiative.

The current project expands previous work by engaging the community to address the abuse of persons with disabilities. This project will benefit persons with disabilities who experience abuse through earlier identification; increase knowledge about abuse and to recognize if it happens to them; availability of updated resources in alternate formats and knowledge of where to seek help; and access to knowledgeable service providers who routinely screen clients and use specialized community services. The project will improve communication, collaboration and coordination between the family violence sector and disability serving organizations, raise awareness about the specialized needs of persons with disabilities who are experiencing abuse, and disseminate best practices. Specifically, the project focuses on the following activities:

- A web page specific to persons with disabilities experiencing abuse on the *Alliance to End Violence* website, with more information, resources and prevention strategies.
- Persons with disabilities will be invited to an “accountability group”, a collection of individuals who will provide project feedback and perspectives.
- The *24-Hour Help for Everyone Listings in Alternate Formats* for persons with disabilities will be updated and distributed to disability service providers, domestic violence prevention and intervention services and to people with disabilities. The 24-Hour Help for Everyone Listings are wallet sized-cards with 24-hour help numbers and a safety plan.
- Draft and pilot of a screening protocol template to be used by Calgary agencies that provide services to persons with disabilities. The project will facilitate protocol updates and staff training in these organizations.
- A training manual will be developed to accompany the protocols and outline the training for violence prevention/

intervention and disability services regarding the issues of people with disabilities.

- The project will be formally evaluated by an external professional source as well as by the accountability group.

On November 14, the group held a workshop entitled *Research in Action* to facilitate the development of the *No Longer Silent* initiative.

Maggie MacKillop from *HomeFront* presented information with respect to Boston’s legislation and services to investigate and address the abuse of individuals with disabilities as a starting point to assess what would best fit in the Calgary context. Boston’s *Disabled Persons Protection Commission* (DDPC) offers a 24 hour telephone hotline for reporting incidents of suspected abuse of adults with disabilities. The program staff review every reported abuse incident to determine the response needed to ensure the safety of those involved. An investigator deals with each call that meets the jurisdictional criteria. In addition, a member of the State Police reviews every hotline call to determine whether a criminal investigation should be initiated. Any suspected criminal activity would be reported to the District Attorney’s Office.



Leslie Tutty

Leslie Tutty from *RESOLVE Alberta* presented the results of a review of the literature and programs that address abuse across the lifespan of individuals with disabilities. Included are projects across North America that could guide the development of an Alberta-made strategy to address disabilities and domestic and sexual assault. As part of this initiative, RESOLVE Alberta has conducted interviews with 20 Calgary community stakeholders on their views of the needs of individuals with disabilities who have been abused at some point in their lives.

The project fills an important gap, as it provides an opportunity for service providers from the disabilities and domestic violence sectors to discuss issues with respect to their mutual clients. ☘

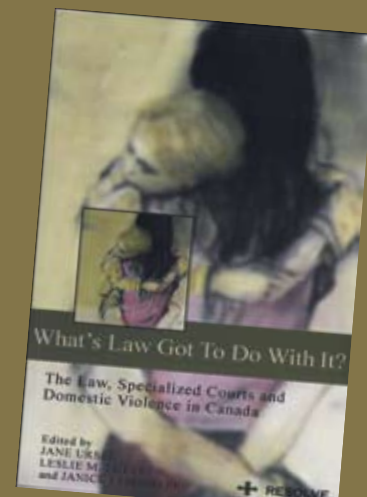
ANNOUNCEMENTS



BOOK RELEASE:

*What's Law Got To Do With It?:
The Law, Specialized Courts and Domestic Violence in Canada*
Edited by Jane Ursel, Leslie M. Tutty and Janice leMaistre

In the past two decades public awareness of domestic violence has increased dramatically. New institutions have been developed, such as transition homes for victims and treatment programs for perpetrators. At the same time, established institutions have been called upon to alter their practices in order to improve their response to domestic violence. ***What's Law Got To Do With It?*** examines changes in the Canadian justice system from the introduction of protection order legislation, to family law, to changes in criminal court procedures. Do protection orders offer victims an alternative for safety without having to involve police or the courts? Do family law courts give due consideration to safety in custody matters where violence has occurred? From the Yukon to downtown Toronto, specialized domestic violence courts are exploring new strategies to aid victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Do these strategies work? In this book we learn from the perspective of prosecutors, victims and researchers about the efficacy of these changes in the justice system. The authors present recent, original research on the impact of specialized courts, the utilization of protection orders and questions about custody in family violence cases.



Left to right: Janice leMaistre, Leslie Tutty, Jane Ursel

December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada. Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, this day marks the anniversary of the murders in 1989 of 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. They died because they were women.

As well as commemorating the 14 young women whose lives ended in an act of gender-based violence that shocked the nation, December 6 represents an opportunity for Canadians to reflect on the phenomenon of violence against women in our society. It is also an opportunity to consider the women and girls for whom violence is a daily reality, and to remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence. And finally, it is a day on which communities can consider concrete actions to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Source: www.SWC-cfc.gc.ca/dates/dec6/index_e.html

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Supporting solutions to violence and abuse

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2008 CARE Grants and Momentum Campaign



Each year, November brings exciting times at Prairieaction Foundation. Board members from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba meet to attend our Annual General Meeting, say goodbye to retiring board members and, in turn, welcome new members. This year we met in Winnipeg and sadly bid farewell to long term board members Sheila Denysiuk, Anne Parker and David Willis. Sheila joined in 2001 and was our Past President this year, while Anne has been our Chair of Nominations since 2004, and David our Treasurer since 2005. Each has played a very active and valuable role in Prairieaction and their presence and wisdom will be missed terribly. We are very pleased to welcome new board member, **Kathryn Ogrzlo** to the role of Treasurer. Kathy is a chartered accountant who resides with her family in Calgary. We at Prairieaction Foundation are delighted the position of Vice President will now very capably be filled by **Mary Rose McGuire**.

Unfortunately, Pat McInnis, our Executive Director for the past year, resigned effective October 30, 2008. The position remains vacant. Pat brought a great smile and lots of enthusiasm to Prairieaction and we wish her much happiness and success.

APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

Over the next six months, members of Prairieaction Foundation will be working very hard to raise over \$197,000. We have an unbelievable opportunity to obtain a \$250,000 gift for Prairieaction, as a generous anonymous donor has agreed to donate \$250,000 to Prairieaction once we raise \$1 million in our **Momentum Campaign**. We have already raised \$802,620.31 of this amount, which leaves only \$197,379.69 to be raised. The anonymous donor has given us until the beginning of June 2009, after which we will have lost this opportunity. To help Prairieaction achieve this goal please contact us at prairie@ucalgary or visit our web site at www.prairieactionfoundation.ca. ☘

RESOLVE Manitoba

~ Dr. Jane Urşel ~
Director (Academic)

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