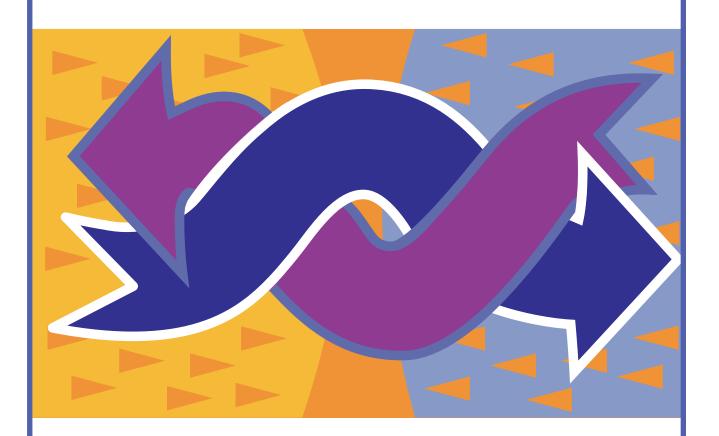
Building Partnerships to End Violence Against Women:

A Practical Guide for Rural and Isolated Communities





Prepared by the Community Coordination for Women's Safety Project A project of the BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs with funding from the

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EVALUATOR

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1. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

1.1 The Community Coordination for Women's Safety Project

The Community Coordination for Women's Safety (CCWS) Project is an outcome of the work of local and provincial women's organizations and of the Victim Services and Community Programs Division (VSCPD) of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG). The project began in 2001 as the result of several years of consultation and coordination that the MPSSG and BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs (BCASVACP) has been doing with groups across the province who are attempting to improve their communities' response to violence against women.

The CCWS Project was designed to help rural and isolated communities enhance intersectoral coordinated responses to violence against women, with a particular focus on women who experience specific barriers to accessing intervention and support services (including Aboriginal women, women of colour, immigrant women, low-income women, women with disabilities, lesbians, transgender women, older women and young women).



Vision:

To increase the safety of assaulted women in rural and isolated communities in BC.

Goal:

To help rural and isolated communities develop new, and enhance existing, intersectoral coordinated responses to violence against women.

Objectives:

- 1. To provide support to rural and isolated communities for the implementation of intersectoral violence against women policies and successful practices.
- 2. To assist rural and isolated communities to address and remove barriers that limit women's access to the justice system and other relevant response systems for women who face particular discrimination.
- 3. To facilitate the development of an effective and consistent community response that enhances assaulted women's access to the justice and other relevant systems.
- 4. To increase a rural and isolated community's ability to analyze issues related to women's safety.
- 5. To support the development of solutions and strategies at the local, regional and provincial levels that address assaulted women's access to the justice system and other relevant response systems.
- 6. To assist rural and isolated communities to identify and bring forward issues that need to be solved at the provincial level.
- 7. To analyze and problem solve identified local, regional and provincial issues using a range of initiatives chosen to effect change.



The project's development and start-up work was managed through a partnership between the BCASVACP and VSCPD. Approximately nine months after the intensive work of project start-up, the BCASVACP took over as the sole managing partner, while VSCPD continued to participate actively in the Working Group. Funding for the CCWS Project has been provided by a broad spectrum of sources, namely, the Law Foundation of BC; the National Crime Prevention Centre Community Mobilization Program and Crime Prevention Partnership Program (Justice Canada); the National Victims Policy Centre of the Federal Department of Justice; the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services; and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. The Law Foundation of BC was the major funder for the first 2.5 years of the project.

1.2 Partnership and Community Coordination

March of 2002, the National Crime Prevention Centre Partnership Program agreed to fund an extension to the CCWS Project—The Partnership as a Primary Tool in Community Coordination for Women's Safety Project—so that we could study and document the aspects of partnership that actively contribute to women's safety, and produce a guide that would share these models of effective partnerships (see section 3.4, How Did We Write This Guide? for more information). This funding has allowed the CCWS Project to explore the strong connection between partnership and community coordination to improve women's safety. Linda Light, in Working Together to Respond to Sexual Assault, describes the connection in this way: "Coordination can be one of the potential outcomes of collaborative partnerships."

Since 1989, community organizations and the Victim Services and Community Programs Division of the Ministry of Attorney General (now the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General) have been involved in the development of *Violence Against Women Coordination Initiatives* in BC. These initiatives bring system-based and community-based representatives together to enhance collaboration on local responses to violence against women. In 1989, the Ministry of Attorney General funded seven Community Coordination Initiatives, modeled on coordination projects in Victoria, BC, and London, Ontario, and on the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention program (see Appendix for more information on these two projects). Since that time, more initiatives have been started across the province, although since 2002 none has been funded by the provincial government. Currently there are Coordination Initiatives in over fifty communities across BC, many of them in rural and isolated areas (a complete list of these initiatives is available at www.endingviolence.org).

The fact that coordination activities related to violence against women had been going on in BC communities and systems for over 20 years was an important and positive foundation for the CCWS Project. For example:

- ◆ Since 1989, coordination in BC has been considered an essential part of implementing the Ministry of Attorney General's policy on Violence Against Women in Relationships.
- ◆ The original partnership with VSCPD was a particular factor in the overall success of the project, as the VSCPD brought and shared extensive links with colleagues in the system, specifically police and corrections. VSCPD also brought their extensive knowledge from their experience of supporting local Coordination Committees and managing 150 victim services programs.
- From 1989 until 2002, VSCPD's dedicated policy analyst managed the funded coordination programs in the province, tracked issues raised in the field that related to policy implementation and worked across ministries for institutional reform.
- ◆ The BCASVACP, with its ten-year history of supporting and building coordination in the field, brought a province-wide network of 150 anti-violence programs and its own good reputation for substantive work on coordination and building partnerships.
- ◆ BC has also benefited from the existence of other provincial organizations who have also been working collaboratively specifically in the area of violence against women. Just to name a few: The BC Institute Against Family Violence, BC and Yukon Society of Transition Houses, Ending Relationship Abuse Society of BC, BC Coalition of Women's Centres, Legal Education Action Fund, BC Women's Hospital and Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Program.
- ◆ CCWS Project staff who were hired brought a total of more than 75 years of "on the ground" experience in violence against women coordination, as well as considerable expertise in coordination research, management, education and resource development.
- ◆ Coordination tools previously developed by VSCPD and others were expanded and adapted by project team.
- ◆ Even though government had stopped funding the six communities in BC that had core funding for coordination work, most of them continued to work in a coordinated manner. Their presence provided a basis for further work by CCWS project team. (These communities were Dawson Creek, Campbell River, Courtenay/ Comox, Nelson, Vancouver and Williams Lake.)



"With the Domestic Violence Unit we wanted to embody the principles of coordination and the conversation that had been occurring over several years—embody that in a service. And embody it in a service that would address the post-arrest, post-charge period, highly dangerous for women and really underserved. And the idea of the partnership was to have really functional coordination, police and social services working together, and actually having to sort it out on the ground, sort out what the response would be and not just talk about it and have it start crashing." — Doug LePard, former Sergeant in Charge of DVU, Vancouver

- ◆ The work of the CCWS Project has been grounded in the evidence-based research and the experience of other communities in Canada and the United States, where coordination among law enforcement and community service providers has proven to be one of the most effective methods of increasing women's safety. Communities with a coordinated response are more likely than other communities to have more effective referral systems, a better understanding of mutual roles and responsibilities and a more efficient use of resources.
- ◆ In this guide, we use "coordination" to mean coordination of a community's response to violence against women through the building of a series of collaborative partnerships among responders. For us, "coordination" is an active word that describes the outcome (a more coordinated response), not the tool to achieve this (working in partnership).



2. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIP

2.1 Violence Against Women in Canada

you are reading this guide, you are probably aware that violence against women is a serious problem in Canada. For the last 50 years feminists have been working tirelessly to raise public awareness of these issues and have been working towards law reform, the development of public policy and legislation and programs that can more effectively respond to what historically was seen as a private matter. Much has changed and we have women to thank for the advancements. However, the statistics tell the story that violence against women remains a serious social issue that still needs our focus and attention. (It is important to note that while statistics are useful, they are generally lower than the actual rate of violence, due to underreporting of crimes such as violence in relationships and sexual assault.)

- ◆ 30% of women currently or previously married have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence at the hands of a marital partner (*Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*, Statistics Canada, 1999).
- ◆ 12% of young women, aged 18 to 24, reported at least one incident of violence by a marital partner in a one-year period— 4 times the national average (*Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, Statistics Canada, 1999*).
- ◆ In BC, three out of ten Level 1 assaults (assaults not involving a weapon or resulting in "serious" physical injury) are spousal assaults. In almost half the incidents the assault takes place in the victim's home, the accused's home, or a home shared by both (*Police and Crime, Summary Statistics, 1991-2000*, Police Services, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General).
- ◆ In 2000, a total of 4,100 sexual assaults and other sexual offences were reported in British Columbia. 87% were classified as level 1 sexual assaults, whereas 2% were level 2 sexual assaults and 1% was level 3 sexual assaults. Another 10% were other types of sexual offences, such as sexual touching or interference, sexual exploitation and incest (Police and Crime, Summary Statistics, 1991-2000, Police Services, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General).
- ◆ In 2000, the majority (54%) of female victims of sexual assault were under age 18 (20% were under age 12 and 34% were from 12 to 17 years old). Adult women aged 18 and over accounted for 45% of the female victims (*Canadian Crime Statistics 2000* − Catalogue no. 85-205, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, 2001).



- ◆ According to the 1999 General Social Survey, Aboriginal people were more likely than other Canadians to report being assaulted by a spouse in a five-year period. Approximately 20% of Aboriginal people reported being assaulted by a spouse as compared with 7% of the non-Aboriginal population (*The 1999 General Social Survey on Spousal Violence*, Statistics Canada, 2000).
- ◆ Immigrant and refugee girls experience higher rates of violence because of dislocation, racism, and sexism from both within their own communities and the external society (*Violence Prevention and the Girl Child*, Yasmin Jiwani et al, The Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence, 1999).
- ◆ 51.1 percent of all women with disabilities experience sexual abuse, 50.8 percent experience physical abuse, and 52.3 percent experience three or more forms of abuse (*Don't Tell Me to Take a Hot Bath*, Shirley Masuda, DAWN Canada, 1995).
- ◆ Women who have experienced family violence are at greater risk for alcohol and other drug problems than those who have not (*Fact Sheet on Family Violence and Substance Abuse*, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 1993).

For many women, the experience of violence is connected to other barriers that they face, including racism, poverty, ableism, homophobia, and geographical isolation. All these forms of oppression create significant barriers to women obtaining help when they have been abused.



Women, particularly those from immigrant and Aboriginal communities, may get caught between the response from their own family and community, and that of the local responders. Their choice to access response services may mean alienation from their own family and/or community. — Ninu Kang, Director of Family Programs and men's treatment group co-facilitator, MOSAIC, Vancouver



There may also be barriers within particular marginalized communities. The Our Women Our Strength (OWOS) program works to address some of the barriers within BC Aboriginal communities that have resulted from the history of colonization and oppression of these communities.



It is extremely difficult for women in rural/isolated First Nations communities to reach out — not just because of a fear of retaliation, but because of a lack of safe support systems in the community (no confidentiality), lack of trust (of anyone outside of their family), inter-family and inter-community politics, etc.—

Anita Pascoe, Pacific Association of First Nations Women





2. Violence Against Women and the Benefits of Partnership

In recent years, a trend towards social and fiscal restraint, and an overall social trend toward focusing on economic issues at the expense of social issues in general, has resulted in cuts to services that relate to violence against women, such as: sexual assault centres, Violence Against Women Coordination Committees, women's centres, assaultive men's treatment programs, court houses, legal services; and changes to related policy and legislation. These cuts and changes have made it even more difficult for abused women to find safety and support.

2.2 Addressing the Fragmented Response

2.2.1 What Is a "Fragmented Response?"

There are many services that respond to violence against women, including community-based victim services, transition houses, Aboriginal organizations, assaultive men's treatment programs, police based victim services, tribal councils and faith organizations, police, child protection, hospitals, probation, social assistance, etc. A woman who has been abused comes into contact with these response services in a number of possible ways. She may involuntarily become involved with police or child protection due to reports by a third party. She may seek help herself from a hospital, a community-based agency or the legal system.

When a survivor of violence comes in contact with community-based or systems-based services, if those services do not have a coordinated response in place, the survivor can encounter gaps in service or lack of coordination of services that may seriously compromise her safety. This is what we mean by a fragmented response. Her community-based support worker may not have the working relationship with police that would help the woman gain the protection she needs; police may not refer women to appropriate community-based services due to lack of information or awareness, or policies that create barriers to a seamless service.

Offenders can also encounter gaps. These gaps can include a lack of voluntary and mandated treatment programs, lack of consistent enforcement of court orders, and sentencing to anger management or mental health counselling instead of treatment that addresses issues of power and control.

Beliefs and attitudes can also contribute to fragmentation of services. Sometimes service providers may struggle to work collaboratively because of historic judgments or beliefs or lack of information about colleagues in other disciplines or other areas of difference such as race, gender, class and ability.



Police or community-based agencies may not have information about nor awareness of the particular barriers faced by marginalized groups, such as the relative lack of accessible resources for women with disabilities, if they have no partnerships that bring disability awareness to the table. —



Monika Chappell, DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) Canada



2.2.2 The Impact of Fragmentation

Women who are accessing services know when services are working well and can experience the direct benefits of this; they also know first hand when collaboration is not happening. A recent BC study confirmed that women who had experienced violence and sought help were well aware of how coordinated the response was. Measures of Empowerment for Women Who are Victims of Violence and Who Use the Justice System by Mary Russell, quotes one victim who stated, "The police, Crown and Probation all worked together and talked to each other in fixing the no-contact order." Russell continues,



In contrast, victims were also aware when the service they received was from an isolated unit [non-coordinated] perspective. For example, one victim who felt that she had been ill-served, that there was little sharing of information between services, described her experience as follows: "There was no team work because each is an individual organization, and you are just left hanging there."



Survivors of abuse usually struggle with a great deal of shame and self-blame: the offenders tell them that they have somehow caused the abuse and many societal attitudes confirm this accusation. Many survivors suffer from post-traumatic stress and physical injuries or serious long-term effects on their health.

Most women who are in abusive relationships want the violence to stop, but do not necessarily want the relationship to end. However, community and system based responders as well as the general public often focus on the woman leaving as the solution to the violence. Women who do leave an abusive relationship may try several times (on an average five to eight times) before leaving for good. The services a woman is able to access during these trial attempts at safety will have everything to do with whether she feels safety is possible.

In addition to these factors, there is the fact that many survivors of abuse are still not safe after they leave their relationship: the abuse often continues or even escalates once a survivor leaves. (Forty percent of women with a violent ex-partner reported that violence occurred after the couple separated, and most of them stated that the assaults became more severe or began after separation [Statistics Canada *Juristat*, Vol 21 No 7, 2001]). It is common for a woman who has been abused to live with a high level of justified fear due to ongoing violence and/or threats of violence. In a small isolated community, a woman may be at additional risk where there is a concerted effort on the part of community leaders to deny or minimize the incidence of violence, or where people who speak out about violence are threatened or assaulted.

When a survivor falls through the gaps created by uncoordinated services, the danger is that she may decide to give up and never attempt to access services again. Fragmentation of services may reinforce the messages that



many offenders give their victims: it's your fault; no one will help you; you will never be safe from me. Lack of coordination of services may also lead to reduced levels of emotional support or physical safety for abused women. Gaps in services for offenders reduce the offenders' ability to access effective services and therefore reduce women's safety. A woman's safety is also negatively impacted by a fragmented response to her children's needs, or to the needs of her extended family.

In addition to the importance of all of the traditional responders (i.e. police, Crown, community-based anti-violence services, etc) working in a collaborative and coordinated way, programs designed to prevent violence also need to be part of a collaborative and coordinated response, as they help change the societal attitudes that lead to violence. It is important that these programs benefit from the knowledge that front-line systems and community workers have gained through their work with survivors of violence. For example, if an education program is aware that, based on statistics, many people in their audience may have already experienced violence, the facilitators can avoid revictimizing approaches such as focusing on victims' behaviour as the route to preventing violence. They can also provide information and referrals when needed. Collaboration between education programs and other community services can ensure that educators have the necessary skills to handle disclosures from audience members and that they deliver messages and information that are consistent with those that support services in the community would provide. This also ensures that individuals that provide services in the community become known to students and parents and that referral processes are shared with parents and teachers.

2.3 The Benefits of Partnership

2.3.1 What Do We Mean By Partnership?

A basic definition of partnership that appeals to us is found in a report prepared by Environment Canada in 1992, Consultations and Partnerships: Working Together with Canadians. This definition focuses on the active quality of partnership: "A partnership is an undertaking to do something together." The Partnership Handbook published by HRDC in 2001 lists a key element of partnership: the "sharing of resources, work, risk, responsibility, decision making, power, benefits and burdens." In Working Together to Respond to Sexual Assault, Linda Light emphasises that partnerships create a "product that belongs to the group as a whole rather than to any one participant."

In this guide, we base our writing on these basic points and avoid developing more detailed explanations. As the literature points out, it may not be useful to place too much emphasis on defining the term:



When placed under close scrutiny, a common definition of partnership is elusive. This is because "working together," means many different things to different people... It could be argued that it may not be realistic, or even





desirable, to try to overly confine the concept of partnership, as elasticity allows partnership to be an organic, evolving concept.

(Partnership Study: National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention—Phase II Summary Report, Justice Canada, 2002)



We want to encourage readers of this guide to be creative and open about your definitions as you prepare either to start or to enhance your own partnerships. This is not to suggest that projects should start without any definitions at all. Partnership implies that all partners are investing resources and energy, and therefore not only share benefits, but also share risks. Without any defined parameters, you may run the risk of not capitalizing on the maximum benefits for all involved.

In our years of experience we have seen many different forms of partnerships that increase women's safety; some were developed at coordination tables, some were developed in coffee shops, one we will discuss later in this guide was developed over a backyard fence. Researchers have documented and classified a whole range of types of partnership.

The *Partnership Toolkit* developed by the Collaboration Roundtable describes three types of management and decision-making models for partnerships: cooperative, collaborative and integrated. In the cooperative model, the most flexible model, each partner has a great deal of autonomy, and joint decision-making is not always required, as "each partner may want to do things differently." In the collaborative model, the partners are accountable to each other; share resources and defer some of their autonomy. Decision-making is a shared responsibility and agreement is necessary. In the most formal model, the integrated model, a whole new entity—the partnership—is formed, which takes on decision making authority; both partners give up a significant amount of individual authority.

Justice Canada's *Partnership Study*, quoted above, also classifies partnerships along a continuum, from consultative to cooperative to coordinated to collaborative, with collaborative being the most integrated and formal model.

As we reviewed the literature, we found that researchers had developed categories of partnership based on how partnerships worked together or who was involved in setting up the partnerships, but did not base categories on why the partnerships were formed or what the partnerships were doing. We have developed three categories of partnership based on these two categories (why and what).

Operational partnerships: These are partnerships between two or more partners with different mandates that focus on carrying out a shared goal based on common beliefs and philosophy. For example:



- ◆ A specialized domestic violence unit within a police department which includes a counsellor/advocate that works with high-risk cases and delivers education to community and police
- ◆ A partnership between RCMP, RCMP victim assistance and Citizens on Patrol to provide surveillance that enforces protection orders
- ◆ A partnership between government and a provincial anti-violence organization
- ◆ A partnership between a male and female counsellor to facilitate education groups for men who have abused their partners

Task-focused partnerships: These are partnerships that are formed to take on a specific task or tasks and no other issues. *For example:*

- ◆ A Domestic Violence Emergency Response System (DVERS) committee established to provide alarm systems and cell phones to high-risk survivors of violence
- ◆ A partnership between a community-based violence prevention organization and a school district to deliver anti-violence education in the schools

Ongoing intersectoral partnerships: These are longer-term partnerships that deal with a specific area or concern and may take on a range of tasks over the course of their existence. *For example:*

- ◆ Community Coordination Initiatives formed to address gaps and fragmentation in services for women survivors of violence (see section 1.2. for more information on Coordination Initiatives)
- Community-based and police-based victim services in a specific community who have come together to formalize and improve referral processes and collaboration
- ◆ A community development project in a rural region based on partnerships for women's and community safety

2.3.2 What Do Partnerships Offer To Partners?

In the current reality of limited funding, partnerships can provide an opportunity for:

- Sharing of limited resources
 - Partnerships can enable agencies to share resources such as office space, equipment or administrative support.
 - Partnerships can allow an agency or group with few resources to access the resources of a better-funded agency.



Sharing of expertise

- ♦ Working in partnership offers opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning and sharing for workers and increased options for survivors that result from all workers broadening their perspectives or their definition of "safety."
- ♦ Workers in different response systems have complementary skill sets; they are good at different things that, when combined, offer a more complete service.
- ♦ Positive partnerships involving, for example, a system and community-based agency, build credibility for both agencies and often therefore increase linkages between the system and other community-based responders. This results in increased access to the services that that particular system may offer a battered woman.
- ◆ Support for difficult work through strong relationships
 - ♦ Partnerships may offer partners the chance for practical and emotional support and validation from their colleagues.
 - ♦ Partnerships may provide opportunities to establish mutual respect for diversity and collectively address systemic barriers.



Regional cross-jurisdictional involvement is important because it recognizes the numerous inter-relationships among the causes and symptoms of crime and violence, as well as between communities. This approach helps motivate and support collaboration because it emphasizes every partner's contributions and incorporates the priorities of all involved. —



Terri Dame, Supervisor, Cowichan Valley Regional Safety Advisory Committee

2.3.3 How Do Partnerships Increase Women's Safety?

Improved collaboration among those providing services ultimately leads to increased safety for women. Rosemary Doughty, one of the people we interviewed for this guide, works in the small community of Princeton, BC in a partnership between the RCMP Victim Assistance Program, the RCMP, and a community-based crime prevention program called Citizens on Patrol (COPS). The program provides surveillance for women who have experienced violence and who have protection orders against the offenders. "Forming partnerships breaks not just my personal isolation [at work] but also the isolation of the women I'm working for," says Rosemary. Ninu Kang, Director of Family Programs at MOSAIC in Vancouver, is one half of a partnership between a male and a female facilitator to deliver groups for assaultive men. Her experience has shown her that this partnership has increased women's safety—participants in the





group learn at least as much from observing the facilitators model a respectful and equal relationship as they do from written information, lectures or exercises. They can then bring what they have learned back to their own relationships.

The ways in which partnerships increase women's safety are both direct and indirect. Below are some more examples listed by our interviewees when we asked them to comment on the impact that their partnerships have had on the partners involved, the community and the safety of women.

2.3.4 The Impact that Partnerships Have Had on Women's Safety in BC Communities

- ◆ A number of communities report that there is anecdotal evidence of a reduction in violent crime since the establishment of a partnership that responds to violence against women.
- ◆ Well-publicized partnerships have led to increased discussion of violence against women throughout the entire community. This discussion in turn has led to a greater awareness that violence in relationships is unacceptable; increased understanding that the offender, not the victim, is responsible for the violence; increased commitment to ending violence; and improved knowledge of services available.
- ◆ Workers involved in partnerships have improved their knowledge of available resources and made professional connections that increase their access to other workers' expertise and resources. This has led to more effective and efficient services for women who have experienced violence.
- ◆ Consistent, formalized contact between community-based programs and system-based programs has led to more effective protection for women who have experienced violence i.e. with ongoing formalized contact referrals get made by the police to the appropriate program.
- ◆ Increased police knowledge and understanding of violence against women has improved police response to women in danger. This improved response has increased community confidence in the police and made it more likely that abused women will turn to the police for protection.
- Increased credibility for support workers within the legal system and increased credibility for police within the community has created an environment that encourages collaboration to work to keep women safe.
- ◆ Some partnerships have led to an increased ability to deliver accurate and relevant information on violence against women to the local media, helping to change societal attitudes—a key part of increasing women's safety.







Our program [collaborative surveillance of women with protection orders] allowed women to stay in the community. It allowed them to continue to work. It allowed their families not to have to be uprooted from houses. And it provided a bigger safety net for them. And I think that the perception of safety is a significant benefit to the community. If everybody feels that they're safe, that alone in itself is a hugely beneficial thing for their mental health. — Staff Sergeant Warren Dosko, Detachment Commander, Princeton RCMP

In our evaluation, the feedback we got from women was that they feel they've been given resources and tools they need to make decisions about what they want to do and make decisions about the criminal justice system: how and in what way do they want to participate. Having more options should increase women's safety. —

Marnie Stickley, Community
Counsellor, DVU, Vancouver

- ◆ Some partnerships have led to increased referrals from RCMP or municipal police to community-based services, helping abused women to receive appropriate and expert support.
- ◆ Increased collaboration among community-based agencies and systems has in some cases led to improved access to services for women who face particular discrimination. For example, improved relationships between police and Aboriginal or immigrant serving organizations have led to more Aboriginal and immigrant women reporting to police.
- ◆ A number of BC partnerships have led to improved training for systems and community workers on issues facing women who experience particular discrimination. A partnership was created between the Justice Institute of BC and DAWN Canada (and others) to develop the video, *Charting New Waters*—information for justice personnel about violence against women with disabilities.
- Ongoing contact, discussion and collaboration between partners acts as a quality check on the work of each agency. Consistent feedback and dialogue in an atmosphere of trust and respect allows for improvements to services that keep women safe.
- ◆ Effective partnerships that address women's safety have inspired others to build more partnerships and have proven that collaboration can work, even between agencies with significant philosophical differences. More partnerships mean fewer gaps in service and more safety for women.
- ◆ Partnerships between organizations with a specific antiviolence mandate and other organizations with a more general mandate, such as neighbourhood houses or community centres, have created more opportunities for women to find out about and access services for women who have been abused. For example, a woman taking ESL classes at a neighbourhood house may learn about services for abused women through a presentation in her class by an anti-violence organization. Or, if a support group for abused women is held at the neighbourhood house instead of at the anti-violence organization, a woman is more likely to be able to attend without the offender finding out. It's also critical that women using services at an anti-violence program are provided with information about other services available to them, such as at the neighbourhood house. In another case, where funding has not yet permitted an anti-violence organiza-

tion to be in an accessible location, partnership with a local service that is accessible can increase access for women with disabilities.

- ◆ Partnerships have led to safer physical environments in the community—for example, better lighting, and to the development of violence prevention programming in schools and other programs such as women-friendly food banks.
- ◆ Violence Against Women Coordination Initiatives have helped reduce isolation and ensure that efforts are not duplicated, and have helped participants develop "best practices" for responding to violence against women.
- ◆ Violence Against Women Coordination Initiatives have also acted as a valuable opportunity to develop an informed coordinated perspective regarding a range of issues affecting abused women, including assaultive men's treatment, restorative justice and child protection.





3. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

3.1 How to Use the Guide

Thank you for your interest in increasing safety for abused women! We hope that this guide will help communities across Canada to create and maintain partnerships to carry out this important work.

The guide is meant to be a practical and user-friendly tool, and is designed for easy reference. At the beginning of the guide you will find information about the background and history of the project and violence against women coordination in British Columbia. Part 2 concerns violence against women and the benefits of partnership. Part 3 contains information that will help readers to understand and use the information in the rest of the guide. Part 4 focuses on the elements that we found were common to successful partnerships. Each section of Part 4 focuses on a different element of partnership building. At the end of each section are practical suggestions about how to incorporate a particular element of successful practice into your partnership. These are ideas that other partnerships have used successfully; your partnership may decide to do the same thing or perhaps modify the idea to fit your community and your particular set of circumstances. Part 5 highlights some successes and challenges that existing partnerships have encountered and Part 6, the Toolkit, provides some partnership tools that the CCWS Project has developed based on our research. Part 7 is the Appendices, including the Bibliography and samples of the materials we used to carry out our research. All sources cited in the guide are listed in the Bibliography, as well as additional resources.

Throughout the guide we have included quotations from people that we interviewed during the research for the guide. There are also a few quotations from external readers who looked at an early draft of the guide. We have included some lengthy quotations because we found our interviewees' explanations of the key elements of partnerships so useful, we thought that communities would benefit from their exact words.

3.2 Why Did We Write This Guide?

3.2.1 Communities Across BC Have Shown That Partnerships Work

The members of the CCWS Project team have worked in the area of violence against women for many years. As the work is focused on the area of coordination, we have encountered many innovative and exciting partnerships that are helping abused women to get effective help from systems (police, court, social assistance, etc), which can often be confusing and intimidating. Partnerships have also helped make community-based services more accessible and responsive to the needs of abused women. Fragmentation of services has always been an issue—that is, the fact that different systems or parts of systems do not always work smoothly together. In general, systems have not

been designed to reflect the reality of women's lives, given complexities like children's needs and the nature of gender based crimes, which often require a much more multi-layered response than non-gender based crimes. These ongoing limitations of the system are often aggravated by external events such as program and policy changes which are not necessarily informed by the reality "on the ground."

In the first year of working on the CCWS Project, it was clear that strong partnerships are primary to building effective safety measures and reducing or eliminating barriers for women who have experienced violence. Effective partnerships can provide more coordinated services and increase safety for women, their children and their extended families. Faced with cutbacks in funding and changes to policy, those who work with abused women have responded creatively, making connections and building relationships that have dramatically improved communities' responses to violence against women. We also know that there are many areas where partnerships still need to be built. For example, partnerships are needed that will reduce barriers for women who have disabilities, women who are Aboriginal, and others who are discriminated against.

Past Coordination Initiatives and recent research in the province, as well as our own experience, have shown that effective collaborative partnerships contribute to systemic change for women's empowerment and safety.



Crimes of violence against women are so complex that one agency cannot meet all the woman's needs. — Jane Coombe, Policy Analyst, Victim Services and Community Programs Division, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General



3.2.2 We Need to Balance Resistance and Reorganization

People working in systems and in community agencies have told us time and again that the reality of the economic climate and the decreasing resources to address violence against women make it more necessary than ever before to collaborate. Anti-violence workers in community-based agencies often come up against the "resist or reorganize" dilemma: is it better to focus on resisting cutbacks and changes or to put our energies into reorganizing in order to do our best with the resources we have left? Making a decision to partner with another organization in order to "do more with less" can be a difficult and controversial process. It is rarely possible to continue to provide the same level of service with less funding even when a partnership is formed. Partners often wonder whether reorganizing after cutbacks and policy changes sends the message to legislators that the changes had little or no impact. Rural and isolated communities with bare bones services are constantly struggling with the dilemma of having to make do with reduced funding while at the same time working to resist the cuts.





Our hope is that both systems and community agencies will continue to form partnerships to fill the gaps in services for women, while at the same time finding ways to express the need for adequate resources and effective policy and legislation. The more we can come together to create a coordinated and collaborative response, the safer women will be.

3.2.3 Partnerships Need Practical Tools

For agencies that specialize in the area of violence against women, any collaboration with other agencies or systems usually means extra work outside of regular hours. At the same time, workers in those other agencies or in systems participate in partnership on violence against women as just one part of their mandates. People who were interested in creating or enhancing partnerships told us that, aside from resources and funding, they needed concrete tools that they could easily adapt to their particular context, so that they didn't have to create resources from scratch.

Our goal in writing this guide is to:

- ◆ Demystify the concept of "partnership" and demonstrate the value of collaborative work
- ◆ Identify the ways that existing partnerships have led to local and systemic changes that have improved battered women's safety
- ◆ Examine the common elements in partnerships that can lead to improved services for battered women
- ◆ Focus on the creative partnership practices that have developed in rural, remote or isolated communities
- ◆ Share our findings with interested communities

We hope that this guide will:

- ◆ Assist responders to work together across sectors
- Support the development of new partnerships in interested communities
- Strengthen existing partnerships, resulting in improved protective measures for women experiencing violence
- ◆ Help reduce cultural, societal, and systemic barriers that limit women's safety

We hope that this guide will provide practical information, support and inspiration to those who are interested in starting or improving collaborative partnerships to increase women's safety.

3.3 Who Is This Guide For?



I think our partnership is one that many other communities could build. I don't think that we were coming close to using the available resources. — Staff Sergeant Warren Dosko, Detachment Commander, Princeton RCMP





I would hope that other districts considering partnerships for safety around women will take the time to consider why it will be of benefit and then have the moral courage to be able to stand up and say, "We're going to do something."—Wendy Herbert, Superintendent, Gulf Islands School District



This guide is for anyone working to end violence against women—people who are concerned about the high rate of violence against women, and who want to join with others to make change to increase the safety of women. The ideas and information presented here may be most relevant for those who are working within community agencies or systems who are looking for new solutions to ongoing challenges. However, this guide will also be useful for other groups, such as faith communities or service clubs, who want to address the problem of violence against women in their communities.

The ideas and the examples we present are meant as a guide only, and not as a prescription. After all, what made these partnerships particularly effective was the creativity with which they were crafted and developed and the ways in which they were uniquely suited to a particular context.

We have outlined what we think are the common elements of effective partnerships, in order to make the guide relevant to all communities, but our focus in this guide, as in all of the work of the CCWS Project, has been rural and isolated communities. The guide is based on British Columbia partnerships but is being made available to other provinces across Canada who may also be able to use this information.

3.4. How Did We Write This Guide?

3.4.1 The Partnership Project

Through the work of the CCWS Project we have heard about partnerships' successes and dilemmas, and have had our own successes and dilemmas with the partnerships that we have been involved in. We felt that others could learn from the information that we have gathered.

In March of 2002, the National Crime Prevention Centre Partnership Program agreed to fund an extension to the CCWS Project, which became The Partnership as a Primary Tool in Community Coordination for Women's Safety. Our goal was to study and document the aspects of partner-ship that actively contribute to women's safety, and produce a guide that would build on the 1993 *Community Coordination Document* produced by the BC Ministry of Attorney General to support policy implementation and share models of effective partnerships with others in BC and across Canada.

Specifically, the Partnership Project has:

- ◆ Identified and documented the key elements of existing partnerships between community agencies and justice system partners that facilitate solutions management and systemic change to improve responses to violence against women,
- ◆ Shared the findings with rural and small town communities,
- Supported and facilitated the development of similar partnership approaches in interested communities, and
- ◆ Developed this *Partnership Guide* that will assist communities in their collaboration work.

3.4.2 The Initial Interviews

Once we received our funding we needed to determine which partnerships we would look at. There are so many creative partnerships across BC that it was difficult to limit our research. We attempted to look at a range of different types of partnerships in different areas of BC. We also conducted a literature and online review to find examples of partnerships from outside of BC.

Members of the CCWS Team carried out the interviews. We transcribed each interview and provided copies of the transcripts to the interviewees to give them an opportunity to change or add to them and to give their final approval for their use.

Please note that most of the interviews were conducted in 2003 and 2004. The status of some of the partnerships may have changed since our original research; for example, different people may be involved, the form of the partnership may have changed or in a few cases the partnership may no longer exist.

The partnerships that we interviewed during our research are:

The Abbotsford/Mission Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee

(Interviewees: Teri McLennan, Coordinator, Abbotsford Transition House and chair of the committee; and Pam Dimond, Coordinator, Abbotsford Police Victim Assistance, and member of the committee)

This committee includes representatives from community-based victim services, police-based victim services, transition house, RCMP and Crown as well as other agencies. The committee also includes a DVERS subcommittee (Domestic Violence Emergency Response System: alarms are installed in the homes of women at high risk for violence) and a Justice Subcommittee.





North Shore Women in Crisis, a partnership between Family Services of the North Shore and the RCMP

(Interviewees: Laurie Kohl, STV Counsellor/Coordinator, Family Services of the North Shore; and Linda Thorp, Coordinator, RCMP Crisis Intervention Unit)

This is a partnership between the Stopping the Violence Counselling Program and the police-based victim services in which the police-based program can refer high-risk women to the STV program and bypass the STV waitlist. Women are contacted by the STV program within 24 hours after being referred.

Vancouver Police Department Domestic Violence and Criminal Harassment Unit (DVU)

(Interviewees: Nick Phillips, former Manager, Relationship Safety Project, Family Services of Greater Vancouver; Marnie Stickley, Community Counsellor, DVU; Keith Hammond, Sergeant in Charge of DVU; and Doug LePard, Deputy Chief, CMND Investigation Division and former Sergeant in Charge of the DVU)

The unit is a collaboration between the Police Department and Family Services of Greater Vancouver, in which three police officers are partnered with three community counsellors from Family Services. The unit takes on the cases of violence in relationships in which victims are considered to be at high risk.

A partnership between the Princeton RCMP, RCMP Victim Services and Citizens on Patrol

(Interviewees: Staff Sergeant Warren Dosko, Detachment Commander of the Princeton RCMP; and Rosemary Doughty, Manager of RCMP Victim Services and Coordinator of Cindy Parolin Safe Homes Program)

This partnership developed out of discussions between the Victim Services worker and the coordinator of COPS and later gained the approval of the RCMP. COPS provides surveillance for women who have protection orders in place against abusive ex-partners. This enables the women to continue living in their homes and working with a greater sense of security.

The Victoria Violence Against Women in Relationships Coordination Committee

(Interviewees: Wendy Walsh and Elaine Morton, Co-chairs)

The committee resulted from a Mayor's Advisory Task Force on Violence Against Women, Children and the Elderly. It became a subcommittee of the parent group after receiving funding through the Ministry of Attorney General. Members of this committee include Crown; a Legal Services lawyer on the civil side; victim services; most police agencies on an intermittent basis (including four municipal departments, military police and two RCMP





detachments); Victoria probation; assaultive men's treatment; Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD); transition house and second stage housing; the Intercultural Association; the Family Justice Centre; and the Military Family Resource Centre. The committee's work is focused on the implementation of the Ministry of Attorney General's Policy on Violence Against Women In Relationships.

The CCWS Project (producer of this guide), a partnership between the BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs (BCASVACP) and the Victim Services and Community Programs Division (VSCPD) of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

(*Interviewees*: Tracy Porteous, Executive Director, BCASVACP; and Jane Coombe, Policy and Program Analyst, VSCPD)

The CCWS Project was designed to help rural and isolated communities enhance intersectoral coordinated responses to violence against women, with a particular focus on women who experience specific barriers to accessing intervention and support services (including Aboriginal women, women of colour, immigrant women, low-income women, women with disabilities, lesbians, transgender women, older women and young women).

The CCWS Project is an outcome of the work of local and provincial women's organizations and of the Victim Services and Community Programs Division (VSCPD) of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG).

The Massett Safer Communities: Everyone's Responsibility Committee (Interviewee: Sergeant Rick Shaw, Committee Organizer/Member, RCMP Massett)

This committee was started by the RCMP to address issues of violence against women in the community, then expanded to consider all forms of violence. The committee includes the RCMP, community-based victim services, RCMP victim services, the Island Women's Centre Society and the Haida Gwaii Society for Community Peace.

A Partnership between Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse (SWOVA), and School District 64 (Gulf Islands)

(*Interviewees*: Lynda Laushway, Project Coordinator, SWOVA; and Wendy Herbert, Superintendent, SD 64)

SWOVA goes into all the schools in the district to deliver "Developing Respectful and Healthy Relationships" workshops, an anti-violence education program for grades 7, 8, 9 and 11. The project also considers youth to be a partner, as they help provide facilitation as well as consultation.

The Prince George Victim Support Services Committee

(Interviewees: Bally Bassi, Social and Justice Services Manager, Elizabeth Fry Society; and Natashia Bacchus, Program Coordinator, RCMP Victim Services)



The Prince George community-based victim services and police-based victim services programs work together to improve the process for referrals between the two programs, and to improve the advocacy provided to local women who have experienced violence. The programs share information and collaborate on training volunteers.

The Men's Treatment Program at MOSAIC in Vancouver

(Interviewee: Ninu Kang, Director of Family Programs and men's treatment group co-facilitator)

This partnership is between a male and female counsellor who provide support groups for abusive men. The partnership was developed because of the need to create a facilitation model that included a female facilitator in order to include women's perspectives and model power sharing between men and women.

The Boundary Family Violence Prevention and Intervention Committee (Interviewee: Kathy O'Malley, Project Coordinator, New Rural Partnerships Project)

This is a Coordination Initiative serving the Boundary region in British Columbia that includes representatives from the Stopping the Violence Program, women's centre, transition house, RCMP, RCMP Victim Services, Children Who Witness Abuse Program, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Public Health Nursing, Mental Health, the school system, Crown, community justice, faith communities, physicians, Aboriginal agencies and multicultural agencies. The initiative includes working groups on information sharing and prevention.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District Safety Advisory Committee (Interviewee: Terri Dame, Supervisor)

The committee is mandated to advise on community safety issues within the CVRD, including safety audits and safety related funding requests. Historically the Committee has taken a very broad view of community safety and crime prevention, which has focused on addressing the underlying causes of crime and victimization, and taking a social development approach. This process has involved research, needs assessment, action planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It has developed with an explicit gender lens that understands that women's safety is key to community safety.

The Dawson Creek Violence Against Women in Relationships Committee (Interviewee: Bill Jackson, Crown Counsel, Dawson Creek)

Members of this committee have included Crown Counsel, police, South Peace Community Resources, community-based victim assistance workers, nurses, doctors, hospital staff, women's shelter representatives, family counsellors, Crown Victim Witness Services, probation and Court Registry, school board representatives and the Dawson Creek Ministerial Society. The





committee's projects have included developing protocol, tracking cases of violence against women to identify gaps in services, and providing public education on violence against women.

We developed the interview questions and the outline for the guide based on a literature review as well as our combined experience with Coordination Initiatives and anti-violence work, including the CCWS Project; we did some of the interviews and further review of the literature and used these learnings to revise the outline for the guide and do early drafts of the guide. While this was going on we were actively learning about and sharing the elements of effective partnerships across the province through the community development and issues analysis work of the CCWS Project.

3.4.3 Further Research

In our initial research, we found that there were few multi-sectoral partnerships in operation focusing on violence against women with disabilities and Aboriginal women. Because of this, we engaged external readers with expertise in these areas. Their comments, along with the comments of our other external readers were used to shape the guide, and in some cases are included as quotations.

One of our external readers, Anita Pascoe, shared information about Our Women Our Strength, a program of Pacific Association of First Nations Women (PAFNW). We have included the program here as an example of a partnership that specifically addresses some of the barriers faced by Aboriginal women who have experienced violence.

Our Women Our Strength

This project is managed by the Pacific Association of First Nations Women (PAFNW). PAFNW supports Aboriginal women and their families through education, liaison, advocacy, research, counselling and support, employment direction, referral and consultation. Our Women Our Strength is a project where PAFNW partners with a certain number of Aboriginal communities each year. Facilitators from PAFNW come into the community and develop a support group for women within the community to begin to address their experiences of violence.

3.5 A Note About Language

Different communities or partnerships may use different terms for the same concept. We have chosen certain terms to use here in an attempt to be consistent throughout the guide.

Violence against women: Our focus in this guide is on partnerships that have been formed to increase women's safety and address certain forms of violence against women: violence in intimate relationships, sexual assault and criminal harassment. Some of the partnerships that we have examined focus on violence in intimate relationships (for example, Coordination Initiatives





that refer to themselves as "vawir" or violence against women in relationships committees) and are affected or guided by policy that is specific to violence in intimate relationships; for example, the BC Violence Against Women in Relationships policy or the RCMP Violence in Relationships policy. (See section 2.1 for more on our understanding of violence against women; see section 4.5 for more information on policies.)

Please note that the language we use in this guide assumes that victims of violence are female and offenders are male. This means that we are focusing on violence against women in heterosexual relationships, given that the majority of violence in relationships is perpetrated by men against women. We in no way want to disregard the existence of males being victimized or violence in same sex relationships.

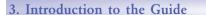
Workers, service providers, responders: We use these terms to refer to people who are involved (as paid workers or volunteers) in assisting abused women, through providing services to the women themselves, the women's children, or the offender.

Community-based and systems-based: In this guide, we describe services for abused women as either community-based or systems-based. The category of community-based includes: community-based victim services, counselling agencies, transition houses, Aboriginal-serving agencies, immigrant-serving agencies, organizations that advocate for the rights of people who face particular discrimination, programs for children who witness abuse, etc. Systems-based services include police, police-based victim assistance, Crown, Corrections, hospital, etc.

Intersectoral: In this guide we talk about "intersectoral collaboration"—that is, collaboration between agencies or organizations from different sectors. Sectors include "the health sector" or "the justice sector" or "the anti-violence sector." Intersectoral collaboration and coordination is a key element of partnerships.

Coordination Initiative: Throughout the guide we use the term "Coordination Initiative," as opposed to "Coordination Committee," as many communities are too small to warrant a full traditional committee structure. Our attempt in language is to be inclusive of both large and small communities. Coordination Initiatives involve two or more people from two or more sectors working together to provide a more coordinated (less fragmented) response to violence against women in their community. We chose to use the term "initiative" rather than "committee" for a number of reasons. Also "initiative" is a more active word, and it allows for the fact that the work may not involve a committee—it may be a time limited task force or a partnership between just two organizations. This is in fact more likely in small rural and isolated communities.







Solutions Management refers to a model for working at the local level to identify, analyze, and resolve issues ("issues" refers to barriers created by policies, procedures or practice of response systems such as community agencies, police, Crown, corrections, MHR, MCFD, Citizenship and Immigration, etc. that impact the safety of women experiencing violence). The model also provides a way to identify and track issues that require action at a regional, provincial, federal or other level. For more information, see the Solutions Management Exercise in Part 6.

Systemic change is the result of work done at three levels:

- **1. Individual:** Advocacy on behalf of a woman, carried out by a community responder in collaboration with an individual system responder to improve the quality or flow of the response that the woman receives.
- **2. Local:** Advocacy done within the system by the system or community responder to enquire into the reason for the problem affecting the woman and possible changes needed to improve overall system response at a local level.
- **3. Provincial:** Group enquiry done at a Coordination Initiative (or by provincial organizations) to analyze whether this problem requires influence at a higher level of authority to improve policy or practice.

When subsequent actions taken to influence change result in new policy or practice on a system wide level, this represents "systemic change."



4. THE ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

our research and experience have taught us that aside from the benefits of having adequate funding, there are particular elements that all partnerships must grapple with. When partners are conscious of these elements and are transparent in dealing with them, the partnership thrives and the outcome of the work of the partnership truly improves safety for women.

Each chapter in Part 4 focuses on a certain element:

- 4.1. The Importance of Building Relationships
- 4.2. Let's Get Philosophical: Finding Common Ground
- 4.3. Leadership, Vision and Commitment
- 4.4. Who Does What: Clarifying Mandates, Roles and Responsibilities
- 4.5. Supporting Best Practices and Polices
- 4.6. Talky-talky vs. Worky-worky: Balancing Task and Process
- 4.7. Confidentiality and Safety
- 4.8. Information Sharing
- 4.9. Power Imbalances
- 4.10. Diversity
- 4.11. Accountability
- 4.12. Knowing When to Dissolve the Partnership

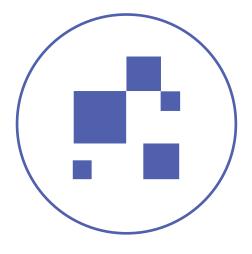
4.1 The Importance of Building Relationships

All the partnerships that we looked at over the past few years have involved detailed planning and documentation, meetings and discussions, and so on. However, partnership often involves more than just the agencies or people working together; it is more substantial, deeper, more complex and requires the same amount of care that one would offer a new friendship.



Relationships form the bridge to deal with any conflicts or grievances or even any good things... grievances can be dealt with informally which leads to less defensiveness. —Natashia Bacchus, Police-Based Victim Assistance Worker, Prince George







Within partnerships, different voices are heard; there is critical analysis and feedback. These are legitimate pieces of a partnership and should be embraced. Partnerships should create an environment of trust, where feedback is welcomed. —Jane Coombe, Policy Analyst, Victim Services and Community Programs Division, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General



At the same time, a healthy partnership isn't the desired final outcome; the outcome of the partnerships we interviewed and worked with is the improved response that those affected by violence against women get. The response needs to be made permanent in some way that endures beyond and does not rely solely on the relationships between particular people. While the members of successful partnerships are quite clear that working with open and friendly people whom they "get along with" is ideal, it is important not to count on a certain person being in a position forever. It is likely that at some point there will be a different person in their position and if the partnership has relied simply on friendships and the unwritten knowledge that certain participants keep in their heads, the continuation of the partnership can be in jeopardy. This speaks to the issue that will be discussed later on in the guide of the importance of documenting and formalizing agreements, instead of relying on continuing good relationships with "good people."

Build relationships by demonstrating your commitment to the partnership in concrete ways.

IDEAS FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- ◆ An RCMP officer working in partnership with community members on a Coordination Initiative demonstrated his detachment's commitment to the project by arranging for his support staff to do the administrative work such as typing minutes for the initiative.
- ◆ A police member of the Vancouver Police Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) talked to his fellow officers and told them to stop making offensive comments and "jokes." He understood that unless this happened the women's counsellors working within the unit would not feel comfortable working in the office and the partnership would not work.
- ◆ The chair of a Coordination Initiative, who herself had a community-based background, worked hard to create a positive relationship with police by taking time to get to know police representatives over the course of a number of years, and making sure that any concerns about police were expressed in a constructive manner.

- ▶ It's vital to have at least one person with a vision and a commitment to developing the partnership. They can identify key players and divide the tasks of the meeting with them, "selling" the vision and bringing them on board. Of course the vision will be very broad and will be defined later by the committee as a whole.
- Some funded coordination projects actually budgeted for time and dollars to take potential new members out to lunch or coffee. This provided the opportunity to get to meet on neutral ground and get to know each other's values and goals. Unfunded committees have found other ways to share this work.
- ◆ In our community, a community-based victim services worker met with an RCMP member who was interested in developing a committee. They brainstormed key players and divided the list of potential members to contact. Sharing the workload made the job easier and having RCMP involved from the beginning strengthened the credibility of the project.
- ◆ The RCMP representative to the Nanaimo Coordination Committee continually provides information to other Members and seeks Members who are willing to become involved. The goal of this officer is to have at least one RCMP member from each watch attend the meetings.
- ◆ At our committee, even small accomplishments are celebrated and success stories are shared at the table. At each annual strategic planning session we review the accomplishments of the previous year. Ensuring people are validated and recognized for their contributions and that successes are acknowledged sets the stage for keeping people engaged.

Keep Your Partnership Happy and Healthy

Thanks to Michelle Novakowski, chair of Nanaimo Violence Against Women in Relationships Committee, for adding these suggestions from her experience in Violence Against Women Coordination Initiatives.

4.2 Let's Get Philosophical: Finding Common Ground



We need to ask ourselves, "Who do we stand for? What are we here for?"—Bally Bassi, Social and Justice Services Manager, Elizabeth Fry Society, Prince George





All of us in the partnership are committed to ending violence and keeping our community healthy. —Rosemary Doughty, Manager of RCMP VS and Coordinator of Cindy Parolin Safe Homes Program, Princeton



4.2.1 Violence Against Women Is A Philosophical Issue

The topic of violence against women has been political and controversial ever since women began to speak publicly about it. One of the most controversial issues has been whether or not violence is gender-based. Although most studies show overwhelming evidence of the connection between gender and violence (see statistics in section 2.1), there has been strong resistance to the idea that violence in relationships or sexual assault is most often committed by men against women. Workers in some programs may have feminist beliefs about violence against women (generally speaking, they believe that violence against women is rooted in an oppression framework, i.e. sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, classism). For other workers, "feminist beliefs" may mean focusing on women to the exclusion of men, and conjure up images of women making "unreasonable" demands. Some workers may have strongly-held beliefs about the societal context of violence against women, while others focus on each case or individual dysfunction without necessarily making the link to the societal context.

Those who work within their own sectors often have (or assume they have) shared philosophy about violence against women: what violence is and what will make women safest. One of the most stressful aspects of entering into a partnership is wondering about the other partner's philosophy and commitment to end violence. One partner may be committed to ending violence against women, while the other is committed to improving a particular sector's response to incidents of violence against women. One of the first tasks of building a partnership is discovering whether you will be able to work together.

Ellen Pence and Melanie Shepard summarize some of the common philosophical stumbling blocks in their recommendations for successful intersectoral work:



Advocates must give up the notion that only they care about battered women and that practitioners in the system are personally responsible for failures in the legal system. Practitioners need to give up the myth that they as professionals have been trained to be objective and fair (as opposed to advocates) and recognize that bias is built into their training and discipline. (Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence: Lessons from Duluth and Beyond, Sage Publications, 1999)





Often, partnerships are formed informally between two individuals in separate organizations, then grow into more formal arrangements between the organizations that may include a funding proposal or development of a new procedure or protocol. While this outcome (the formation of a partnership)



is the ideal, partners often fail to take the initial steps of discussing philosophy. This can be an essential element of bringing their entire organization on board the partnership so that the commitment is broader than just an agreement between two individuals.

4.2.2 Is It Important To Have Shared Philosophy?

In a word, "yes." A strong base of a shared philosophy can help ensure that partners are working towards the same goal. The process of developing a shared philosophy is a key element of creating effective partnerships. Partners build and strengthen relationships through the process of acknowledging and defining the beliefs that they bring to the process, and finding common ground within these beliefs. (For an exercise that helps build shared philosophy, see Part 6.)

What we have found in our research is that there needs to be a balance between ensuring a shared philosophy before beginning to work together AND allowing the partners to work through differences without letting this delay or stop the work. Some philosophical differences can be discussed and worked out more easily in the context of a specific task. For example, partners may have a philosophical discussion in which both agree that violence against women is wrong and it seems that there are no significant differences. However, key philosophical differences might come out in a specific discussion about how exactly the partnership will keep women safe. Or, on the other hand, it might be that partners have a philosophical discussion in which they seem polarized as "feminist activists" and "systems personnel," but when they have a strategy session about a particular task it becomes clear that both partners would approach the task in the same way and can actually work well together on a practical level.

Some philosophical differences may stop the process of working together. For example, if one partner believes that women are never to blame for the violence they experience and the other partner believes that blame for discord resulting from "relationship issues" should always be shared, it may be hard for them to work together. Ninu Kang of MOSAIC underlines the importance of facilitators sharing a common philosophy when doing groups for assaultive men. Not only is it important that both facilitators believe (and communicate to the group) that violence against women is inexcusable, it is also crucial that the facilitators be seen as a united, cooperative team by the group members.

When two partners have not at least discussed their differences in philosophy, it can mean that there is a limit to how closely they can work together. In the case of a task-focused short-term partnership, these limitations may not be a problem. It may be enough to agree on some key elements of philosophy and not others. However, if the partnership decides to take on further tasks or to work more closely together, they may need to have further discussions. If problems arise with the agreed upon task, this may point to the existence of philosophical differences. For example, two agencies with





very different philosophies about violence against women may be willing and able to have a partnership that simply involves agreeing to refer to each other's services when necessary. However, if they decide to work together more closely, they may need to work out some of their differences. If one partner stops referring to the other, this may indicate the existence of underlying philosophical differences that have never been discussed and need to be openly addressed.

4.2.3 Some Common Philosophical Differences

Some common differences are the ones that often come up between police and victim support workers. Pam Dimond, Coordinator of Abbotsford Police Victim Assistance, sees this as the difference between focusing on the investigation and looking at the woman's whole situation and her need for support.



The police are in that investigation mode and all the evidence and details and are a lot more black and white, whereas we look at the big picture of the woman and her situation.



Marnie Stickley, a Community Counsellor at the Vancouver Police Department DVU, says that some general differences can be police wanting to "rescue" women while the counsellors believe she should make her own decisions; police questioning women's stories while counsellors believe them; police seeing their work as a job while counsellors see violence against women as a social justice issue.



Where we met in the middle was always how to maximize the women's safety—"Prove it to me that your method is going to maximize her safety"—that's where the discussions always went.



Marnie's former police partner and current Sergeant in charge of the DVU, Keith Hammond, agrees that the teams within the DVU were able to find common ground. He says that the important philosophical discussions took place one-to-one while teams worked on specific files:



Philosophical agreement was much more important on an individual basis than on an organizational basis. Because you're spending eight hours, nine hours a day with somebody, you have to be able to get over those hurdles of the philosophical differences. And that was really just spending time working on the files and finding out, first of all, what the differences were, and giving each side an equal opportunity to explain why you held those values.





Through the process of discussing specific files, DVU counsellors and police were able to develop some common ground, and both parties report changes in attitude as a result of those discussions. The counsellors have a greater understanding of the requirements and limits of the police officers' role and the police officers have broadened their understanding of the importance of support and advocacy and their definition of safety.

4.2.4 TIPS FOR FINDING COMMON GROUND

1. Start by identifying the benefits that the partnership will bring to each partner.



You always have to identify the shared benefits of each partner, I think that's a good place to come back to, and we've had to do that a lot, like, "Why are we doing this partnership in the first place?"—Nick Phillips, former Manager, Relationship Safety Project, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (DVU)





Finding common ground is the necessary step to fulfil your core function. If you are hunting mammoths, it's the same thing. Common ground: we want to eat mammoth; common ground: we want to protect people from violence. So then you have to work out the benefits: we all get to eat mammoth, or, we all get the benefit of less violence. So [in a Coordination Committeel, the Crown, if there is a strong and active community-based victim assistance Program, gets the benefit of having victims who are more prepared to testify and less likely to be seduced by the honeymoon phase, or so frustrated by the system that they say to hell with it and quit. The victims get a better prosecution and more sensitive handling. —Bill Jackson, Crown Counsel, Dawson Creek



Emphasizing the reasons why a partnership is or will be beneficial can be a good base from which to start tackling trickier questions, and can clarify each partner's commitment to staying and working through differences. If the partners both believe that the partnership benefits them and/or their agency or group it is more likely that they will be willing to come to agreement on philosophical issues or be able to decide together which differences to let go. For example, a community-based victim assistance program and Crown counsel might find that they have differences regarding the use of the

phrase "reluctant victim"— for the Crown it may be an accurate description of reluctance to be involved with criminal justice processes, for the victim assistance worker it may be a phrase that places too much emphasis on the goals of the criminal justice system and too little on the very real barriers that cause victims to be fearful or not ready to be involved. It may be more productive to focus on how the partnership can, by remaining focused on the goal of victim safety, allow all involved to fulfil their specific mandates.

2. Establish bottom line philosophy: what is not negotiable?

Without a clear "bottom line," partners can become engaged in endless irresolvable discussions, and/or end up delivering unfocused services. Are there any issues that simply must be agreed upon before the partnership can move forward? Are there certain values that all partners must hold? For example, partners must agree that violence against women occurs in all cultures, and is not more common in immigrant or Aboriginal communities. Or all partners must agree that the offender is solely responsible for his violence and the victim is not to blame.

Once a bottom line philosophy is established, decide how to ensure that this philosophy is reflected in your work. What will you do if people who become involved in the partnership in the future turn out not to share this philosophy?



We've had to remove police officers and we've had to remove counsellors because they bring in philosophical or ideological views that are just not in conformity with what we're trying to do. —Keith Hammond, Sergeant in Charge of DVU, Vancouver



To avoid having to remove employees from a project or dissolve partnerships, it is important to have clarity about the bottom line when approaching potential partner groups or agencies. Interviewing prospective employees or volunteers for the partnership as a way to screen for values is also important.

3. Aside from the bottom line, be open and flexible.



You have to have someone with some imagination on both sides. Like if we had been really strident—"Oh you can't work with systems, you can't work with the cops, they're paramilitary, they're a dangerous authority"— We had to understand that both of our [police and community] approaches to the issue of violence against women have merit in some form. — Nick Phillips, former Manager, Relationship Safety Project, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (DVU)







It is common for people to have intense feelings and beliefs about violence against women that come from working in the anti-violence field, from personal experiences of violence or from strongly held philosophical or political beliefs. Members of a partnership may find themselves spending a great deal of time and energy trying to convince their partner(s) that their perspective on violence against women is right. It can be easy to lose perspective—that is, to see each discussion as equally essential, to lose the ability to "pick your battles." However, it is unlikely that you will be able to work with other sectors if you are not able to look at putting aside, questioning or changing your own beliefs. When it seems that you and your partner have reached an impasse you might ask yourself: Are there things that I can let go? Are there conversations that maybe don't need to continue? What needs to happen in order to work together for women's safety? Focusing on the outcome of increasing safety for women can help partners gain perspective and remember why and how they can work together towards this goal.

4. Be conscious of how we stereotype people.

Most of us make judgments, at one time or another, about others. We might imagine that because a person is in a certain profession, or from a particular cultural background or sexual orientation, that they will hold certain beliefs and values generally believed to be part of that group. These ideas can be easily reinforced by the fact that *because* someone is from a background or profession different from ours, they may in fact have very different opinions and ideas. They may have ways of speaking that identify them with a particular group or profession. This makes it dangerously easy for us to stereotype that person as just another blankety-blank "feminist/advocate type" or "cop" and not see beyond that judgment to who that person actually is.

In building relationships and partnerships it is crucial to be conscious of stereotyping so that each person can be seen for *all* that they can bring to the partnership. For a tried and true exercise for groups who want to make their stereotyping transparent, and build trust, see Part 6.

5. Be honest about your differences.

Some people may assume that partners can only work together if there are no significant differences; if differences (real or apparent) arise, there may be an effort to deny or minimize them. Partners we spoke to found that this was not effective. While the partnership may end up deciding not to spend a great deal of time trying to iron out or work through differences, it is important to acknowledge that the differences do exist, and can actually be a strength.



When things have been fine and dandy, don't stray away from addressing those challenges when they come up. Sometimes we might stray away from them, but they'll come back again and then you'll have to address them. —

Bally Bassi, Social and Justice Services Manager, Elizabeth Fry Society, Prince George







6. Recognize that the process of working through philosophical differences can be a valuable aspect of the partnership's growth

Go into the partnership expecting differences to come up. When they do come up, treat this as an opportunity to get past assumptions to find out what each partner really thinks and to learn from each other. It can be challenging to do this, particularly when beliefs about violence against women are strong and passionate. Using the other tips in this section and the exercise in Part 6 can help you trust in the value of this process.

7. Find strategies to work around differences.

Sometimes partnerships may go ahead in spite of deep philosophical differences, and the partners find creative ways to work around these differences and get the necessary work accomplished. For example, Teri McLennan, the chair of a Coordination Committee who works at a transition house and is trying to build and maintain good connections with the police has found that language can be a stumbling block. The partners involved in the Coordination Committee have different ways of naming or discussing issues that arise from differences in philosophy. She has found that trying to work out these differences is not necessarily the most effective use of the partners' time and energy. She says, "With the police I use their victim assistance a lot as in-betweens, because they know what's going on both levels. And they speak both languages." She has found a practical way to communicate with the police and continue the work of the partnership by using the police-based victim assistance Program as intermediaries.

A Few Examples
of Language
Differences Between
System and
Community

- ◆ A woman who has experienced violence and accesses services:

 Community agencies will usually refer to her as a woman or a client or survivor. Systems may refer to her as a complainant, witness or victim. Some systems personnel—defense counsel, for example—resist the use of the term victim before a case has been proven in a court of law, as the use of this term makes the assumption that a crime has been committed.
- ◆ The man who has assaulted this woman: Community agencies supporting the woman may refer to him as an offender, assaultive man or abuser. Community agencies that work with the man may refer to him simply as a man, or a client. Within systems he may be referred to as an accused or a suspect.
- ◆ The incident that led to the woman seeking help: A community agency may refer to the incident as battering, violence, or abuse, whereas systems may refer to the (alleged) assault. Some argue that whereas battering reflects the lived reality of abuse, assault reflects more narrow legal realities/definitions. Also, the use of the word "alleged" can come across as not believing the woman.

8. Respect each other's work culture.

When differences in philosophy or ways of working arise, it can help to understand how they may relate to differences in work culture. Particularly if your partnership requires that you enter your partner's "territory" (for example, if the work of the partnership is done out of their office space or you deliver education in their schools) it is essential to respect their ways of doing things. Being willing to respect the norms of your partner's workplace demonstrates your commitment to working together and your appreciation of the work that they do. And if you have questions, concerns or suggestions that relate to your partner's work culture, it is unlikely that these will be heard if you have not first shown sincere respect for what is in place. (Respect, of course, is not the same as agreement.) In our interview with Lynda Laushway, Project Coordinator at SWOVA, Lynda offered a number of concrete examples of how her program has worked hard to respect and respond to the school and teenage cultures they are working within.

Schools have their own systems and ways of operating, knowing who to talk to about what, and what the appropriate protocol to follow is—it's important to be really respectful of those processes.

We have worked really, really hard to find ways to present the material that we're presenting. And it's ongoing because it's not an easy thing to do, to present it in a way that doesn't make anyone defensive.

Youth often translate for us in the curriculum, like "Don't say it that way," and "That's really old."

It is also important to recognize that the representative from your partner agency may have philosophical differences with his/her own agency and not assume that all members of an agency will share a common philosophy.

9. Be patient and have a sense of humour.

Many partnerships emphasized the importance of patience and a sense of humour, two qualities that seem to be necessary in order to be able to work through or around or across difference. Appropriate humour can be useful for breaking the ice, easing tension or boosting morale; laughing together can be an important part of bonding. Patience—a willingness to take the time you need to build relationships and a letting go of the expectation that things will happen immediately—can go a long way towards lowering all partners' stress levels.







Like some sort of old couple that's been together for a long time, you just sort of start to adopt each other's language, it's really true.

—Marnie Stickley, Community Counsellor, DVU, Vancouver



10. Develop a mission statement and goals and objectives.



We discussed the core values of our group. We came up with a draft mission statement and then we sent out a smaller committee to bring back a finished product to us, using the elements we came up with that day. We try to live by those values during our meetings. — Sergeant Rick Shaw, Massett RCMP



A simple mission statement can keep the partnership on focus and can be a good introduction for new members. Developing a mission statement can be a time-consuming process, and members of the partnership who are more task-focused than process-focused may have trouble with this, or even leave the partnership. The mission statement building exercise included in Part 6 may help partnerships move through this process a bit faster.

11. Determine what your benchmarks are.

Refer to relevant documents such as curriculum, legislation, policy etc as tools to guide you in determining benchmarks. There may be requirements that can't be negotiated. Your partnership may be guided by provisions in the BC Ministry of Attorney General's Criminal Justice Branch Policy, the RCMP Violence in Relationships Policy or the rules and regulations of one or more partnering agencies. A school education program will be affected by policies of the school district and individual schools as well as legislation such as the Child, Family and Community Service Act requiring adults to report any suspected abuse of minors.

Some partnerships state that they are accountable to an agreed upon definition of women's safety—this is the benchmark against which members measure their success. In other words, all of their work is seen through a "safety lens." Melanie Shepard and Ellen Pence point out that sometimes, using traditional criminal justice system benchmarks such as an increased number of arrests or prosecutions doesn't automatically ensure that women are safer. They emphasize the importance of keeping safety as the bottom line. (See Part 6 for a practical exercise to use to find common ground.)

4.2.5 The Importance of Written Agreements/Records

We have learned that the whole process of common ground is crucial to developing a strong structure and foundation. We have also learned that there must be a written record of the agreements that are reached.

One reason for the importance of written records is that there is a fair amount of turnover in both community and systems agencies. This is particularly true in rural and isolated communities. If agreements are not written down, they may well be lost, and the partnership may find itself rehashing the same conversations each time a new member joins. It is essential to spend time building good interpersonal relationships within your partnership, but it is risky to count on the fact that someone will stay in a position forever and that partners can rely on a shared understanding. One of the most important legacies that partners can leave is written materials that will help provide a strong foundation of support for ongoing positive relationships and productive work. (Go to Part 6 for the Solutions Management Log in the Solutions Management Tool, for tracking and recording work accomplished on issues analysis and action planning.)



"Developing issues tracking documents can be extremely helpful. In the early 1990s VSCPD started a log of issues that had been raised by front-line workers. The log contains the issue, who raised it, why it was raised, and what was done about it. This is helpful so that when the issue comes up a second or third time there is a reference to action taken previously. This helps in preventing communities from reinventing the wheel and allows our Province to build on previous actions." — Jane Coombe, Policy Analyst, Victim Services and Community Programs Division, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General





There was such a complete turnover, nobody was here from the beginning, so the commitment to the partnership was lost for about a year and a half. And why we were even in the partnership got lost... You end up relying on other people's interpretations of what was said. And what ends up happening is one end of the partnership gets taken advantage of, frustration grows, resentment, and it weakens the partnership. — Keith Hammond, Sergeant in Charge of DVU, Vancouver



Even in cases where there is no turnover in staff, disagreements can arise. Having written records that partners can refer back to can be an important part of addressing disagreements. One mistake that some partnerships have made is assuming that because the partners share a philosophical commitment and have good interpersonal relationships, there is no need to write down any kind of formal agreement.





I strongly recommend that partnerships do have these discussions and do make a formal agreement. This will protect the integrity of the reasons for having the partnership in the first place. It will also protect the relationships between the people involved. —Tracy Porteous, Executive Director, BCASVACP



Workers are often faced with the dilemma that if they take time to write down a mission statement, policy and procedure and so on, they will have to take time away from providing much-needed services. Some partnerships may have the resources to give one or more of the partners extra hours to complete this task or to hire someone from outside the partnership to do this. In other cases, a partnership may need to reduce the amount of direct service it provides in the beginning in order to complete this task and provide more and/or improved service in the long term. Written agreements and records can also help each partner describe the partnership to other workers in their own agency, or to any others interested in the partnership.

4.3 Leadership, Vision and Commitment

While the terms "partner" and "partnership" connote shared responsibility, authority, and ownership, all partnerships to end violence against women need leadership. We're not talking here about someone being a "boss" of the partnership, but rather, someone, or in the case of shared leadership, those among the group, who can set the stage for the work of the partnership by bringing the vision, commitment to, and trust in, both the process of doing the work and the outcome. Leadership in this sense requires an awareness of the ultimate potential of partnership to increase women's safety, and an ability to encourage and collaborate in developing a shared vision for change.

The quality of the product we strive for—in this case, increased safety for women and their children—will be the result of the synergy created through ongoing work of the partnership. The shared vision of the work ahead is continuously changing as the current reality of the issues change. Synergy is often described as the quality resulting from effective collaboration and is said to be present "when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Synergy grows from partnerships where open and honest communication is the norm, relevant information is shared, credit is offered publicly for work accomplished, and the open expression of ideas and opinions is encouraged.





4.4 Who Does What: Clarifying Mandates, Roles and Responsibilities

In order to work well, partnerships must take the time to clearly define mandates, roles and responsibilities. Before starting a partnership, potential partners will need to be clear about what each of them does in their jobs—the roles of their agency and what each is able and willing to contribute to the partnership. These initial discussions may need to be revisited once the work of the partnership actually starts and again when significant external or internal events occur.

4.4.1 Mandates

Each partner will most likely be a member of a group or agency with a specific mandate. This mandate will have an impact on how the partner participates in the partnership and what they are able to do. There might need to be a delicate balancing act between the mandate of the agency and the mandate of the partnership. Differences in mandates can also be part of the reason to form a partnership: to be able to address the issue of violence against women in collaboration from different angles, to share complementary skills, to bring the two (or more) mandates together and have access to each other. The partnership will then have its own specific mandate as well.



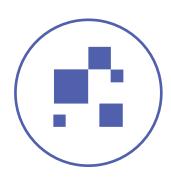
The committee focuses specifically on the criminal justice response rather than on social actions. This has worked well. — Elaine Morton, Co-chair, Victoria Violence Against Women in Relationships Coordination Committee



It is critical that the mandate of the group is informed by the local context. A model that works in a large urban centre may not work at all in a rural and isolated community. Whereas it makes sense for an urban Coordination Initiative to narrow its focus, to one type of violence for example, given that it is in a setting where other resources exist, a rural Coordination Initiative may cast a wider net to include all forms of violence against women.



When a public event is planned in a rural community, like the December 6th Memorial, we need as many concerned citizens as possible to turn up. It's counter productive if only four or five women are on a march. We are just seen as a fringe group and the participants don't feel safe. If there is a broad representation from the community (like all the partners in a Coordination Initiative!), especially men and





women marching together, then passersby take notice. — Nancy Taylor, Co-chair, Robson Valley Community Coordination For Women's Safety Committee



4.4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Every partnership needs to spend some time clarifying the roles of each partner and looking at where those roles diverge and overlap. Each partner will have specific responsibilities in their job and attached to their role in the partnership. These responsibilities may change over time according to the needs of the partnership. Sometimes partners may take on certain roles for strategic purposes. For example, Ninu Kang described to us how she and her co-facilitator divide their responsibilities in order to challenge some preconceptions that the assaultive men in their groups may have.



Sometimes I will provide more empathy to the man. And my partner will make the connection between this man's story or what he's saying with the larger feminist analysis of violence against women. — Ninu Kang, Director of Family Programs and men's treatment group cofacilitator, MOSAIC, Vancouver



4.4.3 Tips for clarifying Mandates, Roles and Responsibilities

1. Determine exactly what the mandate of the partnership is.

This seems like an obvious first step. However, it has happened that partners have enthusiastically gone ahead with a partnership without spelling out exactly what they plan to do. Part of this process includes making sure that there are not existing agencies or projects who are already doing what you plan to do. Checking this first will avoid duplication and wasted resources. If you do discover existing projects, perhaps they can be included in your partnership, adding their expertise and perspective to further enrich your work.

2. Clarify each partner agency's mandate.

Before entering into a partnership, be sure that you are clear on exactly what your partner is mandated to do. This can reduce the chances of unrealistic expectations or misunderstandings. Try using the Partnership Agreement template in Part 6 to ensure that clear information on each agency is provided.



Our function is to prosecute "vigorously but fairly" as it says in the manual. If we help the victim that is a good side effect. So as long as people understand that, it works. On the other hand, if victim assistance workers get in the



face of Crown and tell them they are not doing the proper job, you would be surprised how quickly that relationship will deteriorate. — Bill Jackson, Crown Counsel, Dawson Creek



3. Clarify each individual partner's position in their agency.

It is important that all individuals in a partnership understand each other's position in their agency. For example, within a Violence Against Women Coordination Initiative, partners might include representatives from police, Crown, healthcare providers, women's groups, community-based victim services, and so on. However, representatives will have varying levels of authority and responsibility within their own agency, and this may affect their participation in the partnership. Points to consider/discuss when forming your partnership might include: Does this partner have the authority to speak for their agency or do they need to get approval from a superior before proceeding with any action? Does this partner need to speak to a group/collective in order to arrive at an organizational response? How influential or marginalized is this partner within their agency? How well connected is the individual to their own agency or are they a star expert who ends up speaking for everyone? It is also helpful to be aware (as much as possible) of the context within which each partner works. Has their agency recently experienced changes in funding and/or staffing levels? Is there a high level of conflict or stress? What is the morale like in this agency? These discussions can be difficult to have, but can lead to increased understanding and empathy within the partnership. Situations change, of course, and these discussions will probably happen more than once.

4. Find the level of formality that's right for your partnership.

Some partnerships have an informal way of dividing responsibilities. For example, in a number of cases, partners decide as issues come up who will do what. This may work better in Coordination Committees where there could be a range of projects or tasks. Other partnerships stress the importance of clearly distinct roles and responsibilities and emphasize the need to put these in writing (See section 4.2 for more on the importance of written agreements/records).

Staff Sergeant Warren Dosko, Detachment Commander of the Princeton RCMP, told us that an informal model worked best for the partnership between the RCMP, RCMP Victim Assistance and Citizens on Patrol (COPS) to provide surveillance to women with protection orders against the offenders. The partnership involves just three people—Warren, Rosemary Doughty of RCMP Victim Assistance and Jim Turner of COPS—within a very small rural community. The partners value the fact that they have had "lots and lots of informal conversation and relationship-building type conversations that give people trust." As well, all three partners were already well established in the community and this made it easier to develop the mandate as they went along. They agree that ongoing discussion among the three partners is essential to staying clear on mandate, roles and responsibilities.



5. Figure out the practical steps that need to happen to facilitate partners carrying out their responsibilities.

Beyond having a concrete vision of what the partnership will do, participants need to determine the nuts and bolts, the logistics that need to happen in order for the vision to become reality. There may be practical steps that need to happen such as getting security clearance for civilians involved in partnerships with police or ensuring that regular meetings and briefings take place so that partners have the necessary information to complete their designated tasks. One of the ways that the Princeton partnership clarified their roles, responsibilities and mandates was to start with a few "test cases" before they officially put their program into place. They chose a few women with protection orders who were willing to participate and monitored the surveillance to figure out what worked best.

6. Don't step on people's toes.

Maintaining distinct roles can be a way of respecting each other's expertise. Especially if you are used to having to do things on your own it can be hard to let your partner take on their responsibilities, but of course this can help lighten your workload. In some cases, responsibilities may end up divided along gender or other lines. It's important to acknowledge and address any unfair or unreasonable division of labour.

7. Address problems directly.

Many of the partnerships that we talked to had had to have difficult conversations in which they raised concerns with each other about whether and how the mandate of the partnership is being carried out. Other partnerships have chosen not to address concerns directly and this may have limited their ability to work together.



There've been times on the committee when we've said, "Whoah, somebody dropped the ball here." There weren't any recriminations—it was like, "Well, you know, that wasn't good," and, "Yeah I admit that wasn't good," and then you changed the thing, you put in a safeguard of some sort. — Bill Jackson, Crown Counsel, Dawson Creek





8. Be realistic about what your partner can and can't do for women.

Partners may have unrealistic ideas about what their partners' roles and responsibilities are. One counsellor talked about how her systems-based partner had high expectations about what counselling could do for her clients. When the systems-based worker referred clients to the counsellor she expected dramatic changes in her clients' safety level as a result of counselling.





There's a difference as far as what they're wanting to see happen and what actually happens. Counselling's not going to address all safety issues, and that's where the gap is: in that expectation that if they get her in to see us something magical will happen. —

Anonymous

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Partnerships between systems and community can also help increase community trust and understanding of systems such as police. A number of the partnerships that we interviewed stated that their work had helped workers in the community have a more realistic understanding of what police could and could not do for abused women, which led to a better understanding of the police and better working relationships.

9. Establish structure.

In Building Effective Partnerships: the Process and Structure of Collaboration, Kristina Smock suggests that "community-building organizations often believe that in order to create an inclusive, democratic partnership, formal structure should be kept to a minimum. As a result, they tend to use open and flexible processes rather than developing explicit and enforceable rules and guidelines for interaction between the partners." However, she warns that "lack of formal structure undermines mutual accountability and limits the potential for meaningful cooperation."

Creating structure does not have to be an arduous task. It is beneficial to the partner-ship and also can be a tricky balance. In some cases, such as the beginning of a Violence Against Women Coordination Initiative without a very specific mandate, there may not be many formal rules. Once a significant number of people have joined and committed to the initiative, that may be the point at which it makes sense to establish more explicit guidelines for ensuring attendance and follow-through on tasks. In other partnerships, there may be a need to establish clear guidelines right from the start. Whatever the timing, it is necessary to have at least some formalized structure in order to move forward in a productive and accountable manner.

4.5 Supporting Best Practices and Policies

As a result of over 30 years of collaboration between women's groups, government and law enforcement agencies, British Columbia and Canada now have some useful policies in place to guide the response to violence against women and children. The most effective of these policies are products of collaborative discussion across sectors by folks working in the field with victims or offenders. Sometimes they have been the result of an in-depth case review, like the one carried out by RCMP "E" Division in the aftermath of the 1996 "Vernon Massacre" (Rajwar Gakhal and 8 of her family members were shot by her husband, who later shot himself). This review produced one of the most progressive police policies on violence in relationships in Canada, the RCMP Violence in Relationships (Violence Against Women in Relationships) Policy.

This policy and the BC Attorney General's Violence Against Women in







Relationships (VAWIR) Policy serve several important functions in supporting the work of partnerships working to increase women's safety. By centralizing safety for women and their children, and offender accountability, such policies serve to:

- guide the best practices of responders
- educate responders about the dynamics of violence in relationships
- support and encourage collaboration between responding agencies
- provide a benchmark against which practices can be measured and monitored

Ellen Pence and Kristine Lizdas, in *The Duluth Safety and Accountability Audit*, include a checklist about how policy helps workers respond to violence against women criminal cases:

- ◆ Focus on changing the institution, not the victims
- ◆ Focus on practices, not people
- ◆ Balance between need to standardize and need to be attentive to particulars of a case
- ◆ Process of reform should be built on cooperative relationships
- Nobody owns the whole truth

Key Policies Related to Violence Against Women in BC

- ◆ BC Ministry of Attorney General Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy: The policy directs the justice system to emphasize the criminality of violence within relationships and to take the necessary measures to ensure the protection of women and children who may be at risk and the accountability of offenders. It is available online at: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/vawc/toc.htm.
- ◆ Crown Counsel Spousal Assault Policy: On May 1, 2003 a new Crown Counsel policy on "spouse assault" was released. The policy updates the Crown Counsel portion of the above Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy. This policy is available at: www.ag.gov.bc.ca/legislation/spousal-assault/policy.pdf.
- ◆ RCMP Violence in Relationships Policy: This policy guides RCMP in their handling of violence in relationships cases. It is available online at: www.endingviolence.org/publications/228/RCMPVIRVAWIRPolicy.doc.
- ♦ Best Practice Approaches: Child Protection and Violence Against Women: These guidelines were developed by the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) in collaboration with the BCASVACP, BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses, BC Women's Hospital and BC Institute Against Family Violence. The guidelines are available at www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/child_protection.htm.

4.6 Talky-Talky vs. Worky-Worky: Balancing Task and Process

4.6.1 What Does This Mean?

One of the common differences between partners is the different emphasis they place on process (discussion) and task (work). Marnie Stickley of the Vancouver Police DVU refers to this as "the talky-talky versus worky-worky stuff."

Many people make a clear distinction between talk and work. They believe that discussion of issues or actions is not part of the actual work of the partnership and is therefore not useful. This attitude can sometimes lead to actions that are not highly effective because they haven't been fully discussed.

By the same token, too much talk in the absence of concrete actions may lead to conflict as well. Working together on a specific task (as mentioned in the chapter on philosophical common ground) may be a better means of working through differences and building trust than extensive discussion.

In order to achieve long-term broad change, partnerships need to focus on more than just the tasks to be done. The process of how you are working together is equally important. There will always be those who are process focused (the talkers, planners, dreamers, collaborators) and those who are more task focused (the doers, problem solvers, networkers, product focused folks). Partnerships thrive on balance, and the quality of the product—in this case, women's safety—has everything to do with reaching this balance.

4.6.2 Some Common Examples

A common example of conflict between task and process is when community-based responders are working with systems personnel such as police or other justice system responders. The work cultures of these two sectors are drastically different. There are different measures of accountability, different definitions of "productivity" and "efficiency." These sectors attract different types of people, so there may even be strong differences in personality styles. These are important factors to consider when problem solving. The process types may want to analyse a problem thoroughly before arriving at a solution by consensus. The task types may have a solution before the problem is even fully stated, with a full action plan and commitment to "getting it fixed." It can be hard to work together when these differences in style come up, and difficult to find the value in the other person's way of working. However, both styles are needed with a blend and balance of task and process, the process being the way we work together to affect the quality of the *product*, which is the task.

4.6.3 Tips for Balancing Task and Process

1. Recognize when TALK is part of the WORK of ending violence.

As we mentioned above, process and task cannot be separated. Planning, clarification and debriefing are essential parts of carrying out most tasks. If



some partners do not value or prioritize process, this can compromise the work of the project. Process can also be an important part of modelling consensus building and non-confrontational behaviour as a key part of the partnership's anti-violence work:



Our process is, "Oh, you have a concern. Well, we'll need to stop and talk about that. We need to try to figure out how we can integrate your concerns and address them." And that is absolutely critical because it comes back to walking the talk. We have found you can't deliver a program on having healthy relationships if you don't have healthy relationships in the Project. So we've spent a lot of time in the Project and we actually have a part-time counsellor who works with us, who does a lot of debriefing and working on our own issues as they arise. Because this is volatile work and it invariably pushes people's buttons. You can't be involved in this without being changed. And learning and growing, it's all part of it. And part of that is being able to have a good process. — Lynda Laushway, Project Coordinator, Salt Spring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse





Without good process you can't do any tasks, so it's not a choice. But be clear about what the process is all about and acknowledge the gift of time required for good process. — Kathy O'Malley, Project Coordinator, New Rural Partnerships Project





If you go off on endless process you never get to the task. And if you don't have a process, you are reinventing the mammoth-hunting tool every time. — Bill Jackson, Crown Counsel, Dawson Creek





2. Recognize when there has been enough process.

Some of the people we interviewed who were used to working in a setting where lots of discussion happened talked about how they and others had to get used to doing things differently. They needed to let go of the discussion at some point and move on to action. This is one of the reasons why, during discussions, it is helpful to delegate someone as the chair in order to keep the discussion focused and moving forward.





Some people want to get into the politics of violence against women, and it just doesn't seem to be the place for it, we're just trying to get things done to fill in holes, and gaps in service, so that's my priority, and the politics of it usually we do in our own places. —

Teri McLennan, Chair, Abbotsford/Mission Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee



3. Be aware that your partnership may need to go back and forth between task and process.

It is often the case that as partners continue to work together they find that they have less need for certain kinds of process. For example, they may have come to a solid shared philosophy and values, and not feel the need for philosophical discussions. However, they may still find it valuable to take a day (or a few days) every year for a retreat where they discuss and plan their activities for the next year, in the process re-confirming their shared goals for the project.

It may be that partners have created a solid agreement about their priorities but that agreement comes into question due to an unforeseen event such as a policy change or a change in the mandate of one of the agencies involved in the partnership. In this case it is important to take time to discuss the changes that have happened, instead of taking the position that "we processed this already years ago" and insisting on the need to stay focused on task. It makes sense that some conversations will need to be revisited in times of change.

4. Take time to make "processing" as easy and productive as possible.

Every partnership will have different ways of facilitating process. For a Coordination Initiative it may mean that the chair introduces or frames discussions using certain language or facilitation techniques that enable all members to feel safe to participate and reduces the possibility of defensive reactions. Or it may mean that some discussions and decisions happen within a smaller subcommittee.



If I know there is going to be something that might be a bit conflicting I always introduce it very easily, and I don't start from one side or the other. I introduce it in the middle and discuss it a bit, and talk about what might be instead of what should be, try to keep both positions in line. We work really hard on not making it an agency problem. We give people lots of room, and it keeps it from being a blaming session, or making people defensive. I think we do a pretty good job of that. It's very rarely that somebody walks out of the room feeling like they've been a target of something. Very rarely. Sometimes I think we're a bit easy, but





I'd rather err on that side than the other, because then you wouldn't last too long. And people like to come to the meetings, they're not afraid of coming. Because I figured that was the best way to hold the committee together. — Teri McLennan, Chair, Abbotsford/Mission Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee

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One of the problems we've had is consistency, in terms of who's at the table. We haven't really come to an agreement in terms of who has to be here in order for us to make a decision. That does create a problem because things sometimes get put off until the next meeting, when it would be nice to put them to rest or settle them. So we're still struggling with that a little bit. We started out with over twenty people and really decisions couldn't be made. And now we're down to a core group, we're in a better position to start making those types of decisions. — Sergeant Rick Shaw, Massett RCMP

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For other partnerships, process may be facilitated by having clear time limits for discussions, consistent start and end times of meetings, or perhaps a reenergizing snack mid-afternoon.

Ideas for Useful Process

Elaine Morton and
Wendy Walsh, Co-chairs
of the Victoria Violence
Against Women in
Relationships Coordination
Committee have taken
care to develop useful
process for their committee

- 1. The committee regularly examines current issues related to the safety and protection of victims and periodically reviews their goals.
- 2. Wendy and Elaine determine the agenda and at year-end present a report that documents the issues and actions taken to resolve the problems. They make sure that if a problem concerns a certain sector (e.g. Crown) the representative from that sector is notified before the issue is brought to the table.
- 3. Depending on the problem, they might invite guests to the committee to present information on the issue, or strike a subcommittee that would concentrate on a specific task.
- 4. Elaine and Wendy identify issues through their direct service work: this ultimately keeps any problem solving strategies relevant to the current needs of victims who have experienced violence. Elaine and Wendy maintain good working relationships with systems personnel both during and outside committee hours.

5. If some of the people involved in a partnership have already discussed an issue, share your process with others in the partnership in order to avoid unnecessary discussions.

Some partnerships, like Coordination Initiatives or the VPD Domestic Violence Unit, involve a number of smaller partnerships within the larger structure. In a Coordination Initiative, a few members may form a smaller subcommittee to carry out certain tasks; in the DVU there are three teams made up of one counsellor and one police officer.



If we have worked out an issue amongst one of the counsellor/police officer teams, we will discuss it openly with the other teams just so that they can have the benefit of saving some of that time and energy. Here's what we did and here's why. And the next time it comes up, that team can lean on the first one's example. —



Keith Hammond, Sergeant in Charge of DVU, Vancouver

This sharing can happen at a larger meeting, in which case it would be useful to take notes to refer to if the issue comes up again. Creating a log of best practices or guidelines can help too. Sharing can also build trust, as it demonstrates a willingness for all partners to be open and transparent about various aspects of their work.

6. Be prepared to be surprised by how the partnership changes your habits. Marnie Stickley of the DVU describes how she and her counsellor colleagues have changed over the years of working at the police department.



We used to say, "We need to have some process around this issue," and they [police] would just stare blankly like deer in the headlights—so what is that exactly? After you've been here for a while you start to wonder what that is yourself, and you have to be reminded.



— Marnie Stickley, Community Counsellor, DVU, Vancouver

Members of the DVU have developed a certain level of ease and sense of humour about both the ways they are different and the ways that they have become more similar over the years.





4.7. Confidentiality and Safety

4.7.1 The Conflict Between Safety and Confidentiality

Sometimes the goals of ensuring women's safety and maintaining confidentiality may seem to be in direct opposition. The tension can come up in a number of contexts. The challenge is to acknowledge the two conflicting interests, but to ensure that the woman's safety is a paramount concern. The partnership between Ninu Kang and Sukhdev Sandhu to facilitate men's treatment groups at MOSAIC, for example, encounters the conflict between safety and confidentiality—that is, abused women's safety vs. the offenders' confidentiality. Every member of the group is told up front that Ninu and Sukhdev will share information from the group with the group member's probation officer and/or with his wife or girlfriend if this is in the interest of the woman's safety. Both Ninu and Sukhdev are committed to respecting this particular balance of safety and confidentiality.

One of the clearest examples of confidentiality vs. safety relates to referrals from police or RCMP to community-based victim services programs. On the one hand, police have an obligation to safeguard victims' confidentiality by not releasing personal information without written consent. On the other hand, victims' safety can be significantly increased by a referral from police to community-based victim services, which would involve the police sharing information with that agency for the purpose of referral. Sharing information—often seen as breaking confidentiality—may lead directly to increased safety for women.

Legislation also affects how partners deal with confidentiality and safety questions. Municipal police in BC are governed by the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP). RCMP are governed by the federal Privacy Act. The community based victim support programs are governed by the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA). There are slight differences in the powers to release the name of a victim and other information about her case to community-based victim services programs under the different acts. In general, police take the position that they cannot, because of the federal Privacy Act or the provincial FOI, release information to community-based programs without the victim's consent. Under current interpretations of the existing legislation (federal and provincial), any exceptions to the "consent before release" rule must be decided on a case-by-case basis.

In some communities, community-based victim services workers and police or RCMP have developed protocols together to address the type of consent that is required in order for police to release referral-related information to the community-based program. In current police and court interpretation of privacy legislation, release of the victim's name and contact information for the purposes of referral to community agencies has been characterized mainly as a privacy issue rather than a safety issue. If it were characterized as a safety issue it might come under one of the exceptions to confidentiality under the legislation.

Under the provincial FOIPOP, personal information can only be released with the person's consent. There are also specific exceptions to this rule that allow for a more seamless flow of information if the release relates to safety. First, public officials actually have a positive duty to disclose:

- ◆ Information about a risk of significant harm to the health or safety of the public or a group of people, or
- ◆ Information that should be released for another reason that is clearly in the public interest.

Also, public officials may disclose personal information without consent if compelling circumstances exist affecting anyone's health or safety.

Under the Federal Privacy Act, public officials may release personal information without consent where the public interest in disclosure clearly outweighs the invasion of privacy.

Whether the exceptions under provincial or federal laws will apply, must be decided on a case-by-case basis.

In some cases, the effect of not releasing victim information may be the protection of her privacy at the expense of her safety: without referrals to community-based programs, many victims will not have the enhanced security that can result from the services these programs provide. There is also less opportunity for police and community agencies to work together and support victims in a coordinated manner.

Another example of where the contradiction between confidentiality and safety arises is when a woman who has experienced violence has accessed services at a community-based agency when the violence is still occurring and she is in physical danger but she does not want to contact the police. The community-based worker may feel caught between the desire to contact the police and the desire to protect the woman's confidentiality. If the worker is providing services within a partnership where the partners hold differing opinions on what to do in this case, this can be a major challenge. This is a situation that highlights the need for a coordinated response to be worked out ahead of time.

In partnerships that are effective in responding to violence against women, these conflicting forces have been resolved as much as possible. Situations can still occur, however, where unresolved questions arise. How do you keep a woman safe without breaching confidentiality?

In other situations protecting the woman's personal information is crucial to keeping her safe. For example, not releasing her address or whereabouts in any court document or other document that might then be accessed by the offender.



Both the BC Freedom of Information Act and the Federal Privacy Act allow public bodies to share information for the purpose for which the information was obtained or for a use consistent with that purpose. In BC, communitybased victim assistance programs are contracted to provide victim services by one of our Justice Ministries—the same Justice Ministry that contracts for police, emergency preparedness and response, police-based victim services, corrections, etc. Communitybased victim services are an integral, contracted arm of the justice system, just as integral as the system responders. The authors of this guide, and many people in the system, believe that the "consistent use clauses" of the above named Acts should be invoked to allow for greater information sharing between community and system based responders and to allow a more seamless service for people who are highly traumatized, i.e., those who experience relationship violence or sexual assault.



4.7.2 Tips for Balancing Confidentiality and Safety

1. Develop and use an in-house policy on information management to help guide practice related to information sharing with other agencies.

An in-house policy will help staff within your program make consistent decisions about the release of information. If these decisions are challenged, the policy can then be used to provide a clear rationale for why certain actions were taken. Whatever policy you have should be consistent with provincial and/or federal laws related to information sharing and in keeping with any ethical frameworks covering particular sectors. For example, community based victim assistance programs in BC have province-wide records management guidelines that would apply. Social workers and clinical counsellors have codes of ethics that include principles addressing privacy issues. These frameworks provide a roadmap for practice and policy around information sharing. You should consider larger frameworks in developing your agency's practice and policy around information sharing.

2. Be clear about what "confidentiality" and "safety" mean to your particular partnership. Be open about differing perspectives and find a concrete way to deal with them.

Don't assume that both partners will define these terms in the same way. One partner may believe that no abused woman is safe unless the offender is in jail; the other partner may believe that individual women have different requirements for safety, depending on the circumstances. In a case where police complete an investigation, Crown lays charges, the accused pleads guilty and a conviction is made, systems-based workers may believe that safety has been achieved. However, if the sentence does not include jail time and contact between the offender and the victim continues due to shared custody, counsellors may be concerned about the ongoing contact and opportunities for continued violence. In terms of confidentiality, one partner may believe that it is acceptable to call 911 against a woman's will; the other partner may believe that this is an unacceptable breach of her confidentiality.

Nick Phillips points out some of the differences between police and community counsellors.



[Some responders didn't see] the difference between completing a case [having charges laid and prosecuted] and a woman actually being safe. They don't always go together. Women's lives are complex and there's a complex set of references when you're talking about safety in each individual case. And there's no one size that fits all. — Nick Phillips, former Manager, Relationship Safety Project, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (DVU)







One of the ways that the counsellors and police resolved some of these differences was by agreeing to put women's safety first (See section 4.2 for more on how the DVU worked through these issues).

Sit down with your partner and walk through this issue thoroughly. Design a protocol for referrals that will allow you to provide the most seamless process of getting women to the program with the mandate that provides the most comprehensive service. If these are policies that inadvertently get in the way of what all partners feel would be best, raise these concerns at a higher level. Work towards changing policies that are problematic.

3. Address the challenges that small communities create for maintaining confidentiality.

It is a common belief that it is impossible to protect confidentiality in a small community. A "small community" may be a small town or a reserve or an ethnic, cultural or disability community within a larger urban context. In this situation, where all or most of the community members know each other, including service providers and clients, it can sometimes be easier for boundaries to blur and confidentiality to be breached. One of the challenges that workers in small communities experience is intense isolation, due to the small numbers of other service providers in the area. In some cases, workers have shared confidential client information outside of their workplace because they had no co-workers with whom to debrief.

In spite of the challenges, we would argue, having encountered many rural partnerships that maintain strict confidentiality, that it may be difficult to do, but it is not impossible. One of the CCWS team remembers being part of a discussion on violence against women that was held in a town so small that there was not much more than a bus stop, a grocery store and a school. The discussion included service providers and survivors of violence. A member of the local school board told a story about a woman who used to hide in the school from her abusive partner. The board eventually decided that they couldn't allow the woman to do this anymore as it posed a safety risk for the students. The discussion went on for a number of hours. Towards the end of the day another woman in the group identified herself as the woman who had been hiding in the school. She thanked the school board member for the respectful way in which she had described the situation at the school. The teachers had protected this woman's identity so well that even a board member had never known her name, even though the town was so small that the two women knew each other.

The Our Women Our Strength (OWOS) program specifically addresses some of the challenges to that arise within small Aboriginal communities. The program focuses on strengthening relationships between women in the community so that there is increased confidentiality and increased safety for women within the community.







The OWOS program allows the women to begin to learn how to trust other First Nations women and in turn learn how to re-build their community through education and community empowerment. The program allows the women to gather, to learn how to trust, to understand the history that has supported (and continues to support) violence and teaches them how to identify the cycle of violence so they can in turn change their own response to the violence. The women become safer because they are no longer alone. —Anita Pascoe, Pacific Association of First Nations Women



What do you need to put in place to ensure that you have adequate protection for confidentiality as well as adequate means for workers to debrief and gain support? Some strategies might include: referring women to agencies in other communities where possible, or having workers debrief with a support person outside of the community. These strategies should be included as part of the partnership agreement.



The files we [the case conferencing sub-committee] discussed were assigned numbers, although there wasn't anyone at the table who didn't know exactly who everybody was. It's a small town and the police know who the people are, the Crown knows who the people are and South Peace Community Resources knew who the people were. But we set up all the mechanisms anyway. The safety issue is our core function—public safety and safety of the victims as part of that. The whole process was and should be to foster safety. — Bill Jackson, Crown Counsel, Dawson Creek



See these websites for more information about the abuse of women in rural, remote and farming communities:

www.letswrap.com/dvinfo/rural.htm

www.womanabuseprevention.com/html/rural and farm women.html

(Thanks to Nancy Taylor, co-chair of the Robson Valley Community Coordination for Women's Safety Committee, for telling us about these sites.)

The Praxis International website also contains excellent information on this issue: www.praxisinternational.org.



4. Have protocol for what to do when confidentiality is breached or women's safety is not prioritized.

If one partner feels that another partner has breached confidentiality or has not prioritized women's safety in the way that the partnership has agreed upon, it is important to have a procedure already in place ahead of time for dealing with this situation. What are the consequences? How is each partner held accountable to the partnership's agreement on these issues?

5. Don't let good working relationships be an excuse for breaking women's confidentiality.

If partners from different agencies have developed a high level of trust and perhaps even friendships, an expectation may arise that they will share confidential information in spite of agency guidelines. Without any malicious intent, partners may assume that because they trust their partner they can discuss cases with a level of detail that they otherwise might not. It is important to realize the implications that this might have: the client in question has probably made certain assumptions about the safety of her personal information and she has the right to be the one to decide if this information is shared with others. This also can set a precedent for sharing confidential information based on personal relationships as opposed to policy or legislation.

6. Be creative about respecting legislation related to confidentiality while at the same time working to increase women's safety.

In Massett, the RCMP, because of the federal Privacy Act, have been unable to pass on victims' contact information to community services without her consent, so instead they do their best to ensure that RCMP members are well-informed about community services so that they can give victims appropriate and detailed information about the services and encourage them to contact the services for help.



This has always been a major stumbling block for the police because we need to have permission to make referrals for any victim. This is one of the things that I was trying to accomplish through this partnership [Massett Safer Communities: Everyone's Responsibility Committee]. I wanted each partner at the table to be aware of what services the other partners provide, and I wanted there to be consistent dialogue on that. — Sergeant Rick Shaw, Massett RCMP



Partners may also have other concerns about legislation and confidentiality. With thorough training on relevant legislation and appropriate protocols these issues can be worked through. It is important to make sure that every-



one in the partnership understands current legislation. Legal language can be confusing and intimidating, and some members of the partnership may have less experience than others in interpreting legislation. Open sharing of information and use of plain language can help ensure that all partners are empowered to understand and work with legislation.

If there are stumbling blocks within the partnership related to confidentiality, ask the question:

- 1) Is the refusal to release information or share a copy of a document based on assumptions about the case and the applicable privacy legislation?
- 2) Or is it based on an actual understanding of the dynamics of the case (e.g. safety issues) and the legislation and its intentions?

By asking for clarification about the legal authority that is being relied on to support or justify a particular decision, a partner may enhance their own understanding of that legislation and perhaps increase their partner's understanding as well.

4.8 Information Sharing

4.8.1 Information Sharing Within the Partnership

There are different kinds of information that partners may share:

- ◆ General information
 - Updates on new policies, programs or legislation
 - ♦ Articles on emerging issues
 - Observations of overall trends or patterns in cases of violence against women
- Client-related information
- ◆ Information specific to the partnership

There may be a range of formal and informal arrangements for sharing information, depending on the nature of the information, existing relationships, the agencies involved, the size of the community, etc.

Ellen Pence and Melanie Shepard, in discussing information sharing within Coordination Initiatives, suggest that agencies "agree to exchange information that not only improves the response to individual cases but also allows the coordinating body to monitor adherence to interagency agreements and evaluate the impact of the coordinated effort."





4.8.2 Information Sharing Related to the Partnership

Information sharing related to the partnership can include:

- Talking to the media about the partnership and/or about issues related to violence against women and women's safety
- ◆ Publishing documents created by the partnership
- Writing letters of support or complaint on behalf of the partnership
- ◆ Advertising the services offered by the partnership or events sponsored by the partnership

Information sharing can raise issues such as confidentiality, ownership of materials and the right to speak for the partnership.

4.8.3 Tips on Information Sharing

1. Have clear written protocols for how information is shared within the partnership.

Be clear on what information is shared and how it is shared. What information does each partner require from the other in order to carry out the work of the partnership? How will the representative(s) from each organization involved in the partnership take information back to their organizations? For example, in a Violence Against Women Coordination Committee, how will each committee member share the learnings/decisions of the committee with their own agency or sector? Is there information that must be reported back to each partner's organization? Has sufficient time been allotted for informed consent to happen? Is there a mechanism in place for ensuring that this happens, so that all partners are kept informed?

2. Have clear written protocols regarding partners' responsibility for information shared outside of the partnership.

Be clear about which members of the partnership are responsible for published documents, press releases or other information shared outside the partnership. In a larger partnership, such as a Coordination Committee, it may be decided that a few central partners are responsible for public information—that is, the other partners do not need to approve the information before it is released, and, therefore are not accountable for it either. It is also important to agree about which partner(s) get credit for documents created by the partnership. Who is listed as the author? Who owns the document? Who is responsible for any challenging statements or any errors?

3. Be aware of relevant legislation or regulations.

Legislation such as the Privacy Act, the Personal Information Protection Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act may have an impact on how you share information. Make sure that partners have copies of all relevant legislation or regulations and that partnership protocols conform to these.





4. Make an effort to go beyond what's required in your partnership.

Working hard to share necessary information is a good way to demonstrate good will and commitment to the partnership. For example, in the partnership between Family Services and the Vancouver Police Department to manage the DVU, there is little *official* requirement for the VPD to share information with the contact at Family Services. Because the DVU is located at the VPD, Family Services does not get much first-hand information about its activities. However, Keith Hammond, the Sergeant in Charge of the DVU, has made a point of keeping his contact at Family Services updated, in the interest of creating a positive working relationship.

5. Use the information sharing tools available.

Websites, newsletters, community meetings and emails can all be useful ways to share information with different parties. Some partnerships also rely on impromptu informal meetings to keep each other up to date on the latest developments. What methods will work best for your partnership, given the nature of your work and the people involved? For communities without email or phones, are there other options for communicating, such as a central bulletin board?

6. Build trust.

It's important that partners have developed their relationship to the point that they trust each other to share information appropriately, and that the understanding is deeper than an agreement on paper. Much of the information that partnerships for women's safety deal with is sensitive information. Mishandling of information related to clients, agency policies or partnership activities could have serious consequences. A combination of official guidelines and interpersonal trust is essential.

4.9. Power Imbalances

4.9.1 How Do Imbalances Develop?

People involved in partnerships report that power imbalances can happen in a number of ways. Some exist before the partnership even begins, and result from factors such as unequal access to resources, unequal status in society or unequal levels of credibility in the community. These advantages may be due to the position of the agency or stem from the individual's access to power as a result of gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, age, etc.

Once a partnership begins, partners may develop differing levels of power due to factors such as perceptions of whose work is more important, levels of seniority, location of the partnership (e.g. within one partner's agency), access to information, or ownership of material property used by the partnership (e.g. office supplies, vehicles, etc).

Language is an important part of access to power. There are several ways that people can gain power through the use of language. For example, if there are

certain people who know specialized jargon related to legal issues, and they use this language in a group that includes people who are not familiar with it, the latter can be effectively excluded from the discussion. This can easily happen when people are so used to using jargon that they aren't even aware that they are doing it. This is a particular challenge for intersectoral work. It can be useful to encourage people to define specialized terms as they speak, or even to create a glossary so that everyone can learn the specialized language.

As well, language and ways of speaking can be a sign of class status and access to higher education. In general, the more formal and neutral that a person's language is, the more likely she is to be taken seriously. This is something to pay attention to if you are determined to balance power within your partnership. Notice whether certain people, because of the way they speak, are seen as arrogant, or if someone's contributions to the discussion are dismissed as too "emotional" or "angry."

Partners can also gain power through their behaviour. One person may be so busy that she never has time to discuss issues with her partners or listen to others' questions about her work in the partnership. Another partner may gain power by not sharing information with others. One partner may gain power by taking on all the work and not allowing others to be more involved. A partner may gain power by dominating discussions. Another partner may gain power by not speaking openly about their motivations for being in the partnership or by not participating in important discussions.



A power imbalance can exist in rural communities between partners (both systems responders and community based responders) who are committed to a rural lifestyle and systems responders who are using their rural practice as a stepping-stone to a position in an urban centre. I see this as an example of the "rural/urban split". Also, in rural communities some partners work for very little remuneration, like the church ministers and Safe Shelter Operators. How do we make partnerships feel equitable? Why should a volunteer give up unpaid time when a paid partner does not come forward to take on the tasks of the Coordination Initiative? —Nancy Taylor, Cochair, Robson Valley Community Coordination for Women's Safety Committee



Power imbalances inevitable exist, and it is best to be conscious of them. An imbalance is not necessarily a negative factor; it depends on whether the imbalance harms the partners, the work of the partnership and/or the clients of the partnership. If one person has more power, how do they choose to use that

power? For example, one person in the partnership may have more power because they have more experience than the other partners; the other partners look to this person for support and information in certain circumstances. This power imbalance is not necessarily a negative situation. The person with more experience may use her power to increase the knowledge and skill level of her partners by sharing the information she has gained over her years of experience. She still has more experience and thus more power, but she has used it to benefit the partnership and ultimately the clients of the partnership.

4.9.2 Tips for Addressing Power Imbalances

1. Be clear on what "power" means.

If discussions about power come up in your partnership, make sure the partners are all talking about the same thing. Is it the power to speak freely? The power to withhold funding? The power to make policy? It's also very important to distinguish between the power of the individual and the power of the agency they represent. For example, an RCMP officer may be seen by a member of a community agency as having a great deal of power; however, the officer him/herself may have very little power within the RCMP, depending on their rank. This points to the importance of partners taking the time to learn about each other's work culture.

2. Information is power: if you have it, share it.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for people to make decisions and substantive contributions without information. Effective collaboration requires that everyone involved in the partnership have as much of the relevant information as possible. Shared information equals shared power. Partners may have different, equally relevant and complimentary information. When information is freely shared, not only will the partnership become stronger and more trusting, but women's safety, the ultimate "product" of the partnership, is improved.

3. Take some time (on your own) to make an honest assessment of how much power you have in the partnership.

Many people that we interviewed talked about the importance of recognizing their own power. An RCMP member who acted as chair of a Coordination Initiative realized that he had the power to heavily influence the direction of the initiative. He was aware of his tendency to talk a lot, and to speak forcefully because of the passion he had for the issue of violence against women. He did his best to make space for others to speak and to make decisions. Another police officer realized that he had the power to convince other police officers to change some inappropriate behaviour (like telling sexist jokes). He used this power to improve working conditions for his partners. An anti-violence educator realized that she had more power than the youth involved in the education program. She makes a concerted effort to make space for the youth to do planning and decision making for the program.





Think about the ways in which you have power. Do you have power because of being male or white or able-bodied? Do you have power that comes from your education or experience? Is your work in the partnership considered more important than others'? Once you have considered the ways in which you have power, think about the other people in your partnership and how you can contribute to an egalitarian environment

3. Be prepared to name power imbalances.

If power imbalances are not named, there is great potential for resentment to build. This relates to the importance of process and to the importance of creating common ground. Has your partnership created an atmosphere where members can ask questions or constructively challenge power imbalances in the partnership? Are imbalances named right from the start? For example, one person we interviewed talked about how important it was for his partnership that the person who was in charge of the partnership acknowledged that he was in a leadership role right from the beginning. He did not try to deny the power that he had, and he used his position to try to create as healthy a work environment as possible.

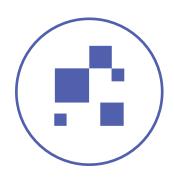
After you have done your assessment of how much power you have, think about how you might react if someone were to question your power. This can be challenging, particularly for those who are not used to thinking of themselves as having power or for those who are used to working in a hierarchical setting where power is neither discussed nor questioned. In a partnership, where collaboration and reciprocity is key, power imbalances must be visible.

4. Take concrete steps to reduce or eliminate power imbalances if necessary.

Once problematic power imbalances have been acknowledged, it is important to move on to finding ways to create a healthy working environment where all partners can contribute.

Interviewees offered practical suggestions about how to do this:

- Have the same number of people from each agency involved in the partnership so that one agency doesn't have more power (in some cases, groups that have experienced particular discrimination may need more representatives in order for members to feel that they have an equal voice).
- ◆ Have all partners take turns hosting meetings at their agencies.
- Make sure the location of the meetings is accessible to all potential participants.
 - One Coordination Initiative realized that there was not much participation from members of the nearby Aboriginal community. They moved their meeting location closer to this community so that it would be easier for members to attend; this did result in increased participation from that community.







Quite often when you're the person in the power, you don't realize that you are the person in the power, and it has to be pointed out to you. I do this constantly with the cops. I tell them that if there is an issue that they can capitulate on that's not compromising their position, then I want them to do it. And I want them to do it for the sake of the partnership, because we have so much more than the counsellors that we have to be seen to be giving whatever we can. And I think it's really important that the person in power and authority recognize that they have that, and make every step to minimize the weight that they carry. I think it's the responsibility of the more powerful partner to minimize the impact of that power. — Keith Hammond, Sergeant in Charge of DVU, Vancouver

This is a challenge for a feminist organization because we don't have a lot of models out there for how to do things in a different way—taking power imbalances into account, or balancing power. Working with the students, something that we work hard at is to treat them as equals and to behave respectfully towards them. And the comments have come back many times from students that part of what they loved about the work was that they really felt like they mattered. It's important to state that, not to try to pretend that there is no power structure here, because there is, and there has to be. — Lynda Laushway, Project Coordinator, SWOVA

- ◆ Make sure that everyone at the table has a chance to speak. Create opportunities for people who are usually silent, and address situations where one or a few people dominate the discussion. A skilled chair can help ensure the smooth running of the group.
- ◆ The DVU has created double-sided business cards with the name of the police officer on one side and the counsellor on the other; this has been a concrete way of showing the equality of the partners.

5. Move on, don't get stuck.

Determine whether all instances of power imbalance need to be addressed; perhaps in some situations there is enough general good faith in each other's intentions to move on in the work.



There was definitely a thing there like Keith had the power with the guys [who had been accused of assault]. We would go to the jail to talk to them and I would be little and small sitting in the corner, and I wouldn't have wanted any more power in that situation anyway. — Marnie Stickley, Community Counsellor, DVU, Vancouver



6. But also don't give up.

If power imbalances have an unacceptable impact on the work of the partnership, find ways to correct them if at all possible.



Quite honestly, I have no doubt in my mind that I could have directed this group whatever way I wanted. I think I could have done it, but that was not the idea. I did not want this to be a police-run or police-dominated group. And I think that's critical, making it a true group process. — Sergeant Rick Shaw, Massett RCMP



4.10 Diversity

When organizations or people attempt to build partnerships with each other, one of the biggest sets of challenges can arise when there are differences in race, culture, ability or sexuality. For example, one partner may be white, Canadian-born and/or fluent in English while the other partner is Aboriginal or is of colour, immigrant and/or not considered fluent in English. Or, in another partnership, most of the people involved might be able-bodied and/or heterosexual while one person is a lesbian or has a disability. It is imperative that your partnership be conscious and respectful of



these issues in order to work effectively across cultures and communities.

Like others in this province, we are still involved in trying to figure out the best ways in which to work together in order to form true partnerships instead of doing what most often happens—a "mainstream" agency determines the direction of its partnership with an Aboriginal or immigrant-serving agency, or a white worker makes all the decisions in the partnership she has with a non-white colleague. Because of situations like these, potentially great partnerships can fail, non-white workers can be marginalized and non-white women survivors of violence can end up not receiving effective services.

Some partnerships we spoke with felt that diversity was not an issue for their partnership because the community they lived in was almost completely white. Others felt that diversity was not an issue because there were people of colour, people with disabilities or Aboriginal people in the partnership.

One scenario has occurred in a similar way in a number of Coordination Committees. The committees made a concerted effort to invite representatives from Aboriginal communities. However, after the Aboriginal people began attending the committee, there was no concerted effort to open up the discussion so that everyone could participate. Consequently the discussion was mostly carried out by white members and was not generally focused on issues that were relevant to the Aboriginal community. It is not enough just to invite people of colour or Aboriginal people into your partnership without thinking about why or how you're doing it. As well, if your partnership is already created and started, and then Aboriginal people or people of colour are "added in" (invited later) it means that the project has already been defined without their input. How much power or influence will they have? What will they gain from their participation?

Another Coordination Initiative held a panel about oppression. One of the reasons that the panel did not have a lasting impact on the initiative was that most of the systems members did not attend. Because there also has to be attention to how to present information in ways that work for the audience that you're targeting, it is important that this kind of event is jointly planned. Try making the purpose of educational events clear, the motivation transparent, the start and end time and planned activities very apparent. Consult with all involved as to what is important to put on the agenda. Chances are that members want to help make all victims of violence safe but they take in information in different ways. How can you support white people in your partnership to listen and respond to complaints and demands from people of colour and Aboriginal people? How can you support processes where all members of the partnership are getting their needs met?



There are very few women with disabilities doing anti-violence work. We have to balance our energy and resources between caring for



our own precarious health and the vital work of making ourselves visible. One of the main struggles that women with disabilities have with partnerships is this balance. It involves all of us being patient and accommodating with women who have their own disabilities and life struggles. Women with disabilities need their own process to assimilate information, clarify, discuss and come to a decision. It takes lots of time, the disability awareness and the willingness of folks without disabilities to be innovative in creating these partnerships. Unfortunately, the world often just can't or won't take the time for that process. — Monika Chappell, DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) Canada

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One of the themes that came out in some of the work that we have done with Aboriginal women survivors of violence is the request, "just go and listen." A request that non-Aboriginal people leave the comfort of their own places and go to Aboriginal people and communities and listen to their realities, just spend some time listening and learning.

As we saw in the last section, command of language is an important aspect of access to power. It is also important to consider whether the partnership is based in the needs of a diverse population. One of the insights that white advocates gained in the process of developing the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Program was that it was very different for a white woman to imagine involving the police in her relationship than for a black woman. White women, particularly middle and upper class women, were used to thinking that the police were there to protect them. Black women, on the other hand, often came from families and communities who had been persecuted by police. It was much more likely that a black man would be harshly prosecuted by the legal system than that a white man would. This is an important learning to keep in mind, particularly when forming partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. In Canada, Aboriginal people are far more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be arrested and to spend time in jail. How can your partnership work to address underlying inequalities like this one?





Embracing diversity and inclusion is the key to finding the best solution. Both parts have to be there—you need to create processes for meaningful input from people who reflect the diversity of your community. — Kathy O'Malley, Project Coordinator, New Rural Partnerships Project





Through the course of our research we heard about a number of factors that can determine whether or not people feel welcome in a group. Often, people from marginalized communities have become accustomed to experiencing racism, ableism or other forms of discrimination. They may come to a partnership anticipating that there will be incidents of subtle or overt oppression. It may be helpful to recognize that this tension might exist and think of practical ways to show that your group is committed to creating a safe environment.

4.10.1 Tips for Encouraging Diversity

1. Put it in writing.

Document your partnership's commitment to creating an egalitarian workplace, working from an anti-oppression perspective, making services accessible to people who face particular discrimination, and/or any other anti-oppression commitment. Review your progress on this issue on a regular basis.

2. Hire/invite people from communities that face particular discrimination to participate equally in your partnership.

When making these invitations it is important to make them for the right reasons. Are you inviting these communities because of how it will be seen by funders or others or because you truly desire and need their equal participation in order for your partnership to be successful? Put work into planning for how best to facilitate equal participation. For example, if you are working on legal issues, will the group or person you are inviting have had access to legal information? Or will their experience of discrimination have led to less access and therefore they require extra information in advance?

3. Hold anti-oppression training sessions for the partnership.

People who grow up with privilege are generally unaware of beliefs they may have that perpetuate inequality. There may be trainers in your community or at least written resources that can help increase awareness of beliefs and lead to more effective partnerships. (See the Bibliography for a list of resources regarding oppression.)



Be aware that there is a difference between "cultural sensitivity" (which can include learning about drumming, beading, dancing, hunting) and "cultural safety" (which addresses over a century of systemic discrimination, oppression, and historic/inter-generational disempowerment). — Sheila Dick, Counsellor/Family Support Worker, Canim Lake Band









Nick Phillips, former Manager, Relationship Safety Project, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (DVU) shared these insights about antioppression work.

There needs to be a sense that the responsibility for making it better, addressing equity, making that happen, is a shared responsibility. When you have that, even though there are still things that are not done, people are happier. But you also talk very clearly about how you can address it, "How far are we going to go with this, what do we mean in addressing diversity, what are the problems that we're talking about wanting to change? Let's be clear about that." You have to be unafraid, and for the people who are experiencing the greater degree of prejudice, it's taxing. And I think in some way that just has to be acknowledged by those who don't experience as much. And when that's acknowledged in a respectful way, it goes a long way to facilitate partnership.

There's another form of oppression, I think of it as pandering to diversity –"Oh I don't know anything and I'll have to rely on Aboriginal people to tell me, or older people, or..." I think you have to be pro-active and stumble and bumble into the midst of it all, and be willing to engage, and not just sit back and learn.

People talk a lot about, "Oh, there's no difference, we're all humans." That doesn't work; there are differences in experience and those things have to be heard and acknowledged, and not brushed over.

4. Address oppressive comments or "jokes."

Any offensive comments or "jokes" can quickly create an environment in which people feel threatened, hurt or angry and of course lose their desire to participate in the partnership. It is not reasonable to expect that partners "learn to take a joke." Instead, addressing and not tolerating such comments can be a strong sign of commitment to working together. As well, if done in a skilled manner, this can provide an opportunity for the person who made the joke or comment to learn from their mistake.

5. Acknowledge reality.

It can be tempting to brush over differences between the partners or to deny that power imbalances exist. However, like other issues we have addressed in this guide, equality issues require open, constructive dialogue as opposed to denial or minimization. It can be helpful to acknowledge the social context of inequality from the beginning, so that issues are not individualized.

6. Don't be afraid to take time to talk.

Discussions related to diversity are a good example of when talk and process are important work, and not "extra." Of course there may be many spontaneous discussions of equality issues. But you may also set aside time for training or discussion regarding issues of inequality and diversity. It is crucial to plan carefully and to have skilled facilitation in place so that discussions can be as constructive as possible and contribute to the goal of increasing safety for all women who have experienced violence (see comments above on focusing discussions).

More Thoughts from the Frontline

Marnie Stickley of the DVU also had comments on how diversity issues play out in partnerships.

A lot of that stuff came up for the cops talking about what it was like to be out as a woman in patrol, what it was like to be Chinese and whatever. A lot of that discussion happened all the time. People would say, "This is the first time I'm talking about this, because this is not talked about in police culture."

What does it take to work here? And that's really important, because it's just a set up for cops who come in who are not interested in going there, or for counsellors who come in and just can't be flexible enough, be able to roll along with it, keep the work in focus. It's all based on relationship building. Whether or not you can say, "You know what? What you said was really



offensive and this is why it's not OK for me." It's all about how many hours in the day you spend together, what you say to each other, how you relate. It's completely about your relationships with people. Otherwise it's a process that doesn't work. You can't send cops into an environment—I'm thinking of the anti-racism training on coordination ages ago—they don't know what that is and they don't get it and they're not equipped to get it at that level. They require relationships to do that work. A lot of addressing discriminatory or racist practices or ideas really comes from relationship building.

I can't emphasize how much diversity has to do with people's everyday lives. Like just culture shock. Like a lot of the cops, at least at that time, not so much now, but they have very particular lifestyles that tend to match each other's and we don't have that lifestyle. And so much of it is about that. So you have to be able to handle it. And we would dish it out just as much as they would. Like we were not easy on them when they talked about their broken down lawnmowers, we just couldn't hold back. Or going to church. So it's been a learning process.

7. Create strong connections between the partnership and agencies or groups serving communities that face particular discrimination.

Communities that face particular discrimination may not be part of your partnership. However, the more you have these communities involved in your partnership the more likely it is that your work and efforts will reach women in these communities. Your partnership can be made more accessible for all women by building connections with other agencies or groups in your community to share information and skills as well as to make the best referrals possible. For example, most of the staff of the DVU are white and Canadian born, but they have formed strong relationships with immigrant and other services. Many Coordination Initiatives have representation from Aboriginal bands and immigrant-serving agencies. By opening up your partnership to all communities you are potentially lessening their marginalization and increasing opportunities for learning.

8. Explore options such as providing services off-site or providing services in languages other than English.

A number of partnerships that we spoke to found that making adjustments to existing services, as long as it was carefully done, enabled the services to be more





accessible. Simply moving the physical location of a service can significantly change the clientele that are able to access it, and can challenge service providers to learn how to best serve that community. Making an effort to provide services in a language other than English can be a perfect opportunity to create a connection with an immigrant serving agency or group. For example, many counselling programs for abused women have formed partnerships with social service agencies in smaller towns outside of where they are located. The social service agencies are providing counselling space for a day each week so that women in those communities don't have to travel to the counselling program.



Partners need to find out how each other works. When partnering with populations such as women with disabilities or immigrant or Aboriginal women, partners may need to be willing to "go the extra mile" in terms of finding a workable environment. Specific accommodations may need to take place to facilitate exchange of information, for example with deaf women. Racism might need to be addressed as a factor that limits partnerships and extra work might need to be undertaken to address these issues. Be flexible! — Monika Chappell, DisAbled Women's Network



Reducing Barriers to Equal Participation in Your Partnership

Adapted from suggestions by Sheila Dick, Counsellor/Family Support Worker, Canim Lake Band.

- ◆ Include Aboriginal people as much as possible. Be sure they are not "tokens," included simply to make the partnership look good.
- ◆ Be aware of and honour the great effort that marginalized people make in order to come to the partnership table. They are probably overworked, due to lack of resources in their community, as well as nervous about how they will be treated in the partnership.
- Commit your partnership to addressing local examples of oppression in the health, social, and justice systems.
- ◆ Make sure your partnership is seen as supporting and/or initiating anti-racism work.
- ◆ Take on the gruelling task of defining what "equality" means for everyone in partnership, then practice it.
- ◆ Admit you don't know everything and can't fix everything.

(DAWN) Canada

- ◆ Challenge all forms of discrimination—racism, sexism, ableism, classism, heterosexism and all the other "isms" out there.
- ◆ Work to understand that barriers for marginalized populations are extremely complicated and include personal, cultural, social, spiritual and political aspects.
- ◆ Be open to learning what marginalized populations can teach you about life, caring, survival, and resistance.
- ◆ Celebrate differences (instead of pretending there are none).
- ◆ Admit your preconceptions and prejudices because we all have them—it doesn't make us bad, just uninformed—and become informed and educated.



4.11 Accountability

4.11.1 What Do We Mean By Accountability?

Accountability in a partnership means that partners are required or expected to meet one or more agreed upon benchmarks; i.e. they are expected to produce certain deliverables or to carry out their tasks in a certain manner. Partners may be accountable not only to each other, but to their own agencies, their clients, and/or the community at large.

Some partnerships state that they are accountable to an agreed upon definition of women's safety—this is the benchmark against which members measure their success. In other words, all of their work is seen through a "safety lens." Melanie Shepard and Ellen Pence point out that sometimes, using traditional criminal justice system benchmarks such as an increased number of arrests or prosecutions doesn't automatically ensure that women are safer. They emphasize the importance of keeping safety as the bottom line.

The Partnership Toolkit prepared by the Collaboration Roundtable proposes that effective accountability is based on five principles:

- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Clear and realistic expectations
- Expectations balanced with resources
- Credible reporting
- ◆ Reasonable adjustment (i.e. based on monitoring)

This emphasizes the fact that effective accountability is dependent on other aspects of the partnership being healthy. Accountability is not possible without such conditions as clear and open communication, understanding and respect for how each partner is accountable to their own agency, flexibility and trust.

4.11.2 Tips for Ensuring Accountability

1. Have a clear understanding about whom you are accountable to and what you are accountable for.

Once you are clear about mandates, roles and responsibilities (see section 4.4), figure out whom you are accountable to. Are you accountable to your partner? How about to your own particular agency? Is there a larger body that governs the partnership? Are you accountable to funders? What about the women you serve? The community at large? If you say that you are accountable to the women you serve or to the community, what exactly does this mean? It might mean that you do your best to guarantee that you will provide a certain number of hours of service a week or that you will provide certain kinds of services or that you will provide these services in a certain way.

There may be different levels or kinds of accountability for different partners. For example, on a Violence Against Women Coordination Committee, some



members may have the authority to represent their agencies and are therefore more able to take action on issues identified at the committee, whereas people who attend but do not officially represent their agency may need to check with their agency before they commit to acting.



For anybody trying to form a partnership, clarity around accountability is really valuable because things happen that you don't expect to happen. That's just life. And you need to know, in the moment, who's accountable. — Lynda Laushway, Project Coordinator, Salt Spring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse





We've both been very very clear from the beginning that we're actually working for women. Even though we're working with the men, and we're talking about all sorts of things with men. But I know that right from day one we have said to each other in our debriefing that our true clients if we had to identify them, were women [their safety]. – Ninu Kang, Director of Family Programs and men's treatment group co-facilitator, MOSAIC, Vancouver



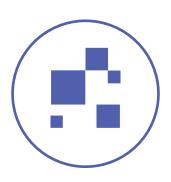


What I love about the CCWS Project is that it's not about blame. We're all responsible for the fact that someone in our community might not be safe, so how do we work collectively to respond to this? — Tracy Porteous, Executive Director, BCASVACP



2. Discuss what might happen if different "accountabilities" conflict.

What happens when accountability to your partner conflicts with accountability to your agency or to the women you work with? This conflict came up in the Vancouver Police DVU. The community counsellors struggled with the fact that they were expected to share information with their police partners yet the women they worked with expected them to keep their information confidential; in fact, the women would often specify that certain information not be passed on to the police. The community counsellors felt caught. They had to respect both parties' expectations. The head of the police unit at that time, Doug LePard, made it clear that victim safety was the main priority. He told the counsellors that they only had to disclose information to their police partners if it was information that would "compromise our credibility in court, or the integrity of the case, or our own or the victim's safety." In this case strong leadership allowed both expectations to be met. He believed that the accountability to clients took priority except





in special circumstances. Currently in the DVU, there is strict confidentiality between the counsellor and the woman, which is only broken if there is a danger to the woman's safety. In this case, the counsellor would go to their supervisor, who would then consult with the police supervisor on how to best address the issue.

3. Review your work on a regular basis.

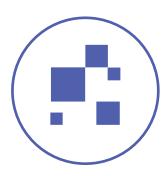
The partnerships we spoke with had reviewed their work in various ways to get a sense of whether they were accomplishing what they had set out to do. Some assessed their work on a case by case basis; some reported on their work to a larger committee a few times a year; others hired an evaluator to do a thorough evaluation at the end of a few years. The evaluator interviewed participants in the partnership as well as clients and members of the community to assess the effectiveness of the partnership. Evaluation is an essential part of getting feedback and changing or adjusting your work in response. Evaluation is a concrete way of demonstrating your desire to be accountable to those you serve and to each other.

4. Be direct with concerns.

Some partnerships we talked to had suffered from the impact of unexpressed frustrations with their partners. Because of lack of time or energy or because of poor communication, frustrations had built up over time. One interviewee wondered whether ongoing tension was a result of philosophical discussions that had not happened at the beginning of the partnership, as well as a lack of clarity about mandates. At the end of the interview she was considering going back to those basic discussions as a way of increasing understanding and hopefully easing current frustrations.

Responding openly to complaints is of course a key part of accountability. But expressing complaints and asking for clarification or change can also be seen as an important part of each partner's accountability to each other. If complaints are made directly and with good intentions, they can demonstrate respect for the other partner and faith in their desire to do the best work possible. As well, if complaints are made directly, they provide the opportunity to clear up misconceptions: maybe there is an explanation for the situation that you are concerned about. Maybe your partner was unaware that their actions were problematic and will appreciate the perspective or information that you offer.

When you prepare to talk to your partner about your concern, think about how it relates to your partnership's end goals. What can your partner change in order to better contribute to the work to increase women's safety? When responding to a concern, it can be helpful to remember that listening is key—be as open as possible in exploring the rationale behind why your agency is working in a certain way. This can increase understanding and cooperation and lead to open brainstorming about what is needed. Be aware of how power imbalances may interfere with open communication. Are there ways to reduce these imbalances (see tips in 4.9)? Are there factors to be aware of that might impact your or your partner's ability to have open discussion (for example, one part-





ner's experience of racism and mistrust of "authority" figures may make it additionally stressful for them to contemplate a challenging discussion).

5. Have an agreed upon process for addressing concerns.

It is helpful to establish a feedback procedure at the beginning of the partnership. Sometimes this step is missed because the partners feel so positive and excited about working together that they either don't anticipate complaints or they don't want to interrupt their positive connection by implying that there may be problems in the future. We suggest having a clear and formal process in place that includes the requirement that complaints be documented in writing. Establishing this procedure at the beginning can help ensure that important feedback is dealt with in a fair and consistent manner. You will probably need to establish one complaints procedure for complaints between partners and another for complaints about the partnership from clients of the partnership or from members of the community. When writing the complaints procedures, think about what the next step would be if the complaint were not resolved at a certain level. Who has the final accountability?

6. Build in a formal process for positive feedback and appreciation.

Many partnerships miss this crucial step. It makes good common sense to acknowledge good work where good work was done. Sending letters to agency supervisors/managers or to detachment commanders can go a long way to motivate people.

7. Be aware of rules and regulations that might already apply.

Partners may be employees of agencies that already have clear guidelines for accountability and clear complaints procedures. Whatever process you put in place for the partnership needs to be consistent with legal, policy and ethical frameworks that apply to the various players within their respective systems. These larger frameworks may apply to the partnership as well. The Attorney General's Policy on Violence Against Women in Relationships suggests that justice system personnel should participate in Coordination Initiatives; the Child, Family and Community Service Act states that all adults have the responsibility to report abuse of children. These can be seen as examples of legislation that affect how accountability is conceived of and carried out in your partnership, aside from the decisions of those involved.

4.12 Knowing When to Dissolve the Partnership

Often, when partnerships are losing steam, we feel we are without the tools for reenergizing them. We think our only option is to let the partnership die a natural death. This is not always the case: many working partnerships have been successfully revived through a process of revisiting the partnership's goals, objectives and accomplishments. The progress of a partnership is not necessarily linear. As in all relationships, there are up cycles and challenging cycles, boring cycles and productive cycles. If we can see the work of the partnership in a cyclical way, rather than linear, there may be more opportunity to recharge the partnership's batteries when they run low.

However, it is also important to acknowledge when the partnership has met its objectives and should come to an end. If dissolution of the partnership is not done with intention, it can just be left to fizzle out. Ideally, the partners can dissolve the partnership in a way that acknowledges their accomplishments and sets a foundation for working together at a future time.

4.12.1 Tips for Successfully Dissolving a Partnership

1. Discuss the ending of the partnership when you first start out.

Some partnerships might be formed specifically for a certain period of time or to complete a certain task. In these cases, it will probably be a straightforward process to discuss how the partnership will end. However, even in partnerships without a specific end date, it is still essential to decide how the partnership would end: what circumstances might lead to the partnership ending? How would the relationship be formally dissolved? Your partnership agreement can include a section on dissolution (see sample agreement in Part 6). If dissolution is seen as a possible outcome, it may not be easier to do once the time comes.

2. Explore alternatives to dissolving the partnership.

If your partnership seems not to be working, you may need reenergizing, or a temporary break. It may not be necessary to end the partnership completely.

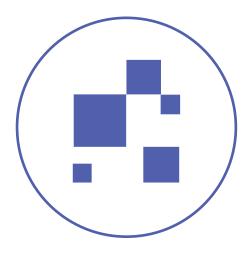
Evolve not dissolve the partnership, maintain a seat at the table, be flexible with level of involvement, acknowledge the changing realities but keep the long term vision in mind, exercise diplomacy, avoid embarrassment, focus on a new task that is more inclusive if you want to maintain the partnership.

3. End the partnership in a manner that allows for future collaboration.

Even if there have been significant disagreements that led to dissolving the partnership, every attempt should be made to end the partnership in as respectful and constructive a manner as possible. *The Partnership Toolkit* prepared by the Collaboration Roundtable offers some practical ideas for ending partnerships on a positive note:

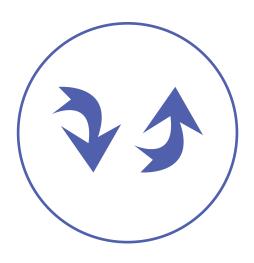
- ◆ Identify the accomplishments of the partnership and acknowledge those who have been involved in the work.
- ◆ Develop a communications plan for informing others of the changes in the partnership.
- ◆ Record the history of the partnership and the lessons learned through the collaboration.
- ◆ Plan for an event to celebrate the activities and outcomes of the partnership.

When one door closes, hopefully another one opens. Leadership, engagement and commitment do not always have to be fulfilled by engaging in a partnership. Organizations can still work together in constructive ways. Partnerships have to be flexible. Players in the partnership need to exercise diplomacy and be creative to what is most useful at the time.









5. CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

In general, what we found through our research is that attention to the elements described in Part 4 is key to achieving successful partnerships. In addition to these elements, there are other factors that can present challenges or contribute to successes. In this section we present a summary of some of these factors.

5.1 Challenges To Watch For

All partnerships will face challenges. And as we have seen in other parts of the guide, these challenges can be used as opportunities for the partnership to develop and deepen. Challenges will vary according to the partnership—the type of partnership and the particular people involved. We have listed some common challenges, both internal and external.

5.1.1 External Challenges

The major external pressure identified by partnerships was the lack of adequate funding. Many partnerships rely on volunteer work by their members, as there is not funding available to pay them. Most funding is project-oriented and short term. The lack of funding can lead to increased territorial feelings and competition with other agencies or sometimes within the partnership as well. At the same time, one of the key benefits of partnerships is that the partnership can act as a place where people can talk and get support and take action for the pressures that they are facing as a result of cuts to services.



The work of the CCWS Project is about building capacity and strengthening relationships and our successes are starting to solidify after three years—uncertainty about future funding was the number one pressure the project faced from the beginning. — Tracy Porteous, Executive Director, BCASVACP





I would like to see a funded coordinator who could set up the [Coordination Committee] meetings and whip us into shape because it exponentially increases the effectiveness of the committee. — Bill Jackson, Crown Counsel, Dawson Creek



The partnerships that we looked at also discussed pressures that came from the general public. On the one hand, some partnerships felt that there was pressure from the community to "solve the problems of the world." On the



other hand, some partnerships had to respond to letters to the editor in the local paper, or to other forms of complaints, from people who felt threatened by the focus on violence against women and questioned why the partnership was operating at all.

Another challenge can be responding to beliefs about certain cultures that come from within or outside of the culture. For example, when Ninu Kang began developing her partnership of a male and female facilitator for men's treatment groups, she was faced with the challenge of addressing the belief held by some members of the Indo-Canadian community that men in the group could never respect a female facilitator.



What is cultural? How do you be respectful if a few people from a culture stand up and say, "This is the way that it works best for us." How was I to stand up and say, "No, I think a male and female facilitator would do a superior job to a man." I mean, who was to say which model would be better? — Ninu Kang, Director of Family Programs and men's treatment group cofacilitator, MOSAIC, Vancouver

Ninu was faced with the challenge of disagreeing with other members of her community while still being committed to creating effective treatment groups specifically for Indo-Canadian men. Now, ten years after the groups began, Ninu sees more acceptance both in her own community and in the "mainstream" of the idea of a female facilitator.

5.1.2 Tips for Responding to External Challenges Responding to Financial Pressures

This can be one of the most time-consuming tasks of the partnership. Lack of funding presents massive challenges, and at the same time, funding comes with its own challenges.

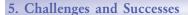


In community-based partnerships, the needs of the partnership come first and the role of government (or any other funder) comes second. Basically, members must shift their thinking from fitting into program guidelines to looking at long-range goals and finding resources that are appropriate. (The Partnership Handbook, HRDC, 2001)



In other words, it can be difficult not to get caught up in trying to fit your partnership into a particular funder's requirements as opposed to staying focused on the vision of the partnership.







1. Write funding proposals.

Funding proposals can be time-consuming and stressful to put together—a necessary task. There are a few things that can make it easier. The CCWS Project maintains a list of potential funding sources for BC anti-violence projects (the list can be found on the BCASVACP website, www.endingviolence.org). It lists federal and provincial funders and their areas of interest, as well as deadlines. Checking out this list can be a good way to get started. It is also helpful to prepare a package of materials. This can be cut and pasted into various funding applications, so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel for every funding application. The package might also include: your mission statement, information about your project's history and structure, bios of members of the partnership, a budget for your proposed activities, support letters, and any information that shows that your partnership is innovative. Most funders prefer projects that are innovative and that have strong community support. Once this package is in place, perhaps two or three members of the partnership can each have a copy and take on the preparation of applications. Many funders are willing to spend some time talking to you on the phone or reading a letter of intent before you go to the effort of preparing a full application. This will save you time and help you put together a successful application.

2. Be clear about the particular needs of your rural partnership.

Some funders may not be aware of the needs of rural communities that are different from urban centres. For example, rural projects will probably need additional funds for travel, conference calls or other means of helping partners communicate with each other.

3. Make attempts to get your partnership included as part of existing ongoing funding agreements.

If your partnership is not a one time task, is meeting a need, and is proving to increase women's safety, is there any way to make it part of ongoing program funding from one of the partners' agencies?

4. Be creative about using resources.

Explore ways of supporting the partnership that don't require increased funding. Perhaps partnership members' responsibilities outside the partnership can be reorganized to support their work inside the partnership. Perhaps there is a way that volunteers can take on some of the work. Perhaps an agency can offer the use of meeting space, phone lines or staff time.

5. In the case of changes to funding policy or legislation, make sure that the government is aware of the impact of the cuts.

If changes occur that affect women's safety, make sure you communicate the impacts you are seeing through your partnership to those who make decisions. Policy makers and legislators would want to know if a change in one area is inadvertently affecting the safety of women. Your partnership might see reporting both positive and negative effects as part of its responsibility.



Responding to Community Pressures

1. Do some education in the community.

The Vancouver Police DVU has reduced misconceptions about their partnership by doing as much community education as possible. This has helped educate other agencies about what the unit does, and has improved relationships with these agencies and assisted with referrals. No partnership will thrive and make an impact if no one knows about it. Be sure to build in some promotion and information sessions for other stakeholders in your community.

2. Present a unified front.

If there are negative pressures from outside the partnership or negative assumptions, it is important for the partners to present a unified front—or to deal with any tension between them that might prevent the development of a unified front. This cooperation between the partners can help in itself to address any community concerns. For example, community suspicion about police may be eased by witnessing the police and community-based support workers working together.

3. Demonstrate to the community the benefits of your partnership.



What I'm really trying to do now is to get a couple of high-profile events into the community, in order for the community to see there's something happening and to enhance the profile of the group. — Sergeant Rick Shaw, Massett RCMP



Partnerships have tried various strategies to raise their profile in the community, including instituting an annual award for anti-violence work and hanging the partnership's banner in a prominent location in the community.

4. Identify policies or practices (government or agency) that may be harming the partnership and strategize about how to address them.

Partnerships we spoke with identified challenges such as the a lack of adherence to policies that require systems personnel to participate in community Coordination Initiatives, and turnover within agencies participating in the partnership that can result in a loss of momentum. One of the responses to the latter issue is to prioritize putting minutes, agreements and policies of the partnership in writing in an attempt to minimize the loss of congruence that results from turnover. Another response is to create comprehensive background packages for new members so time in meetings is not continually diverted from the regular work of the group. These and other responses are critical to maintaining momentum, since turnover is an inevitable.



Having to revisit the goals and mission of the committee and start from square one every time a new person shows up can be frustrating for the group. In Dawson Creek [when there was a paid coordinator] we developed a manual that included the mission statement, philosophy and goals of the committee, as well as a one-page overview of its history. Unfunded projects are at a disadvantage in not having the staffing to do these types of tasks. — Michelle Novakowski, Chair, Nanaimo Violence Against Women in Relationships Committee

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What I would do, because of the turnover, particularly in small communities in the north, is to have some kind of mentoring system [for the Coordination Committee]. We had that amongst the doctors. One doctor who was very active brought another doctor along and got him quite interested in it. — Bill Jackson, Crown Counsel, Dawson Creek



5.1.3 Internal Challenges

Many of the potential internal challenges for partnerships have been discussed in detail in Part 4 under specific categories. In summary, the key challenges identified in the partnerships we studied were:

- ◆ Philosophical differences, i.e. is violence against women gender based, an individual pathology, or?
- ◆ Varying levels of commitment and motivation
- ◆ Stereotyping of each other
- ◆ Staff turnover
- ◆ Government reforms and policy changes
- ◆ Need for clarity on roles, responsibilities and mandates
- ◆ Need for formal structure and recording
- ◆ Adherence to best practices and policies
- ◆ Need for balance of task and process
- Varying degrees of understanding of the need to address diversity
- Conflict between confidentiality and safety
- ◆ Complex barriers, both legislated and perceived, to information sharing
- Power imbalances





Keep The Motivation High

The Partnership
Handbook,
written by Flo Frank
and Anne Smith for
Human Resources
Development Canada,
lists some of the
most common
problem areas:

- Facilitation and leadership
- Motivation
- Managing transition
- Recognition and celebration
- Staying on track
- Asking questions and listening
- Holding effective meetings
- Burnout

Ideas for motivation from the Partnership Handbook:

Motivation is ordinarily based on two things: one is the reason for being involved in the partnership; and the other is the amount of energy or enthusiasm we will bring to it. Motivation, or the lack of it, can be a big concern in partnerships. It is important to be very clear about what is motivating each individual's involvement in the partnership thereby allowing everyone to know and understand the direction from which each person is coming. Equally important is openly discussing what is needed to keep members interested in the partnership's work. It is much more difficult to get re-motivated after burning out or losing interest than it is to consider it right from the start. Motivation, much like attitude, is infectious.

Thoughts to be considered and discussed:

- In order to discuss motivation in partnerships it is beneficial to have a fundamental understanding of motivation in general.
- ◆ People feel motivated about life, ideas and activities to the degree that we feel we share in them, have a contribution to make or can be useful.
- Recognition and reward, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, will go a long way to keeping us interested.
- ◆ Mostly we stay motivated as long as we feel satisfied about our involvement or the quality of the job we are doing.
- ◆ We particularly like to do things that use and build on our existing skills and help us to acquire new ones.



- ◆ Food, fun and companionship work well as motivators. So does the actual work of the partnership—whether it is building a sandbox or putting the world back in order.
- Negative motivation is equally real and is usually caused by fear, guilt, pressure or someone pushing our buttons to get us to do things.
- ◆ States of "almost motivated" or "recently motivated" exist and should be acknowledged. Sometimes just mentioning it helps to move it along in the direction you want.
- People have phases of high and low motivation about life in general, relationships or the work in which we are involved.
- ◆ We can't stay highly motivated all the time nor can we be indifferent for extended periods.
- ◆ The responsibility for motivation is a combination of others doing the right things to keep us encouraged and the personal "do it yourself" method.
- ◆ What we eat, how we sleep and our relationship with ourselves and others, our gods and nature all play a role too.

5.1.4 Tips for Responding to Internal Challenges

1. Work at keeping up partners' energy and enthusiasm.

Members of anti-violence partnerships are often overworked and stressed. It can be difficult to maintain interest in the partnership, particularly when working in partnership is stressful, or, on the other hand, when the partnership is not actively working on a particular task. Partners have used various strategies to counter this:

- ◆ Keep meetings short and focused.
- ◆ Go back to the basics: If you haven't written a mission statement, values/grounding assumptions, ground rules, goals, etc. begin this process. If you have these in place, revisit them to renew your commitment.
- ◆ Stay focused on the work of improving women's safety by being willing to identify and name the problems; work toward solutions.
- Keep vigilant about the balance of task and process.
- Make a point of appreciating everyone's involvement and all progress.







We're taking baby steps but I think every step makes a difference. —

Sergeant Rick Shaw, Massett RCMP



2. Dedicate time to the partnership.

It can be difficult to prioritize the partnership, especially if it is something that you are expected to attend to off the side of your desk. It can help to schedule regular meetings well in advance—for example, one partnership sits down at the beginning of each year and schedules monthly meetings for the next twelve months. Some partners set aside certain days of the week or month for meetings. Some schedule annual planning meetings that take a few days.

It can help to find ways to make your partnership tasks more efficient. Can some meetings be held by email or phone instead of in person? Can some information be distributed via email without having a meeting at all?

3. Make sure that the partners are the right people for the job and don't be afraid to make changes if necessary.

Many partnerships that we spoke with emphasized the importance of having the right personnel. They had had experiences with spending lots of time trying to make situations work when in retrospect they realized that they simply hadn't hired the right person for the job or had the right people at the table. This can be a very difficult decision that sometimes will not be clear except in hindsight. It points to the importance of having a clear and rigorous hiring process and complaints procedure, maintaining good communication and being clear about who needs to be at the table.



Don't kill yourself on partnerships that don't work. — Marnie Stickley, Community Counsellor, DVU, Vancouver





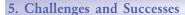
You get the right people. And you don't ever compromise. If you can't find the right person, you keep looking till you find that, because they're out there. But you never, ever compromise the project. — Nick Phillips, former Manager, Relationship Safety Project, Family Services of Greater Vancouver (DVU)



4. Maintain ongoing, open communication.

This has been a theme throughout the guide and cannot be overemphasized. In order to do effective planning, build on successes and address gaps, communication is essential. Attention to issues such as power imbalances and diversity as well as the other elements we have listed both requires and supports clear communication.









The effectiveness of partnerships can be challenged by a variety of factors. A great deal depends on how the partnership is structured and the processes used to implement the partnership. Power relations, operational dynamics and "turfism" are all potentially problematic if there are no mechanisms established to manage expectations or resolve problems. Lack of communication and lack of clarity about issues that are important to partners (e.g. constraints of confidentiality); failure to be inclusive (especially of those who work with clients); questions of trust (a fundamental dynamic in inter-agency relations), and the reality of competition, conflict and organizational autonomy with the criminal justice system are all potential stresses in partnerships. (Partnership Study, National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Phase II Summary Report, Justice Canada, 2002)



I think the challenges are the same in having a healthy relationship with anybody. I mean, we've been required to have a healthy relationship with the school district, with our partners. And that means doing all the things that any healthy relationship has: behaving with respect, listening, having clear boundaries, respecting other people's boundaries, having clear communication. And I think it's really important to develop good working relations with people. So, having a sense of humour, an optimistic outlook and a positive attitude—I think they're all really important. —

really important. — Lynda Laushway, Project Coordinator, Salt Spring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse

5.2 Creative Practice

One of the most challenging aspects of putting together this guide was the fact that many partnerships, particularly those in rural, remote or isolated communities, are engaged in what one might call "creative practice." These are practices that may not necessarily be strictly in accordance with a narrow interpretation of applicable policy or legislation. For example, some partners might take on tasks that their mandates do not officially allow them to do; others might share information in ways that push the boundaries of their own policy, but because of the level of trust built over years of working together, partners begin to push the boundaries of mandates and guidelines and begin to work in creative ways to address the needs and safety of women and children.

From what we have seen, a certain amount of creativity is not only inevitable, but necessary. Much legislation and policy has been written to respond to the needs of urban centres. A worker in a rural community may be bound by a mandate that says she can only provide certain services. However, she may decide to provide other non-mandated services simply because there is no one else in her community who can do it. An RCMP member might go outside the strict definition of his duties because he needs to develop a connection with a support worker in his community in order to be able to build community trust in the police. We have seen that creativity, persistence and a willingness to think outside the box have been essential in communities where resources were minimal. In some cases it is largely these creative practices that have kept women safe.

We encourage these creative practices. We know that at times mandates and policies can restrict a responder's discretion to act in ways that they believe could increase a woman's safety. However, what we have found throughout our work of studying partnerships is that the key to building a solid safety response is in collaborative intersectoral case and issues analysis. This analy-

sis, over time, will build the safety lens that all responders can use as their benchmark for best practice. In this way, ongoing dialogue about such questions as when to soften strict adherence to confidentiality guidelines or mandates will add to our collective understanding of "safety" and thus contribute to our benchmark. Without these dialogues, responders may be making decisions in isolation that could put a woman at risk.

In communities where we saw strong partnerships, responders did not work in isolation. Issues such as policy implementation or gaps in process, knowledge or understanding were discussed openly between the partners so that improvements could be made. Creative practices were open processes that were agreed upon between the partners in order to improve a response or increase a woman's safety. Survivors and responders had a sense of being part of and supported by the wisdom of others.



I think that this is probably one of the things about living in a small community, that we have to be innovative, in order to overcome what seem like insurmountable obstacles to having a healthy community. The commitment to that is something that we all share. It's amazing what we've been able to accomplish. —



Rosemary Doughty, Manager of RCMP VS and Coordinator of Cindy Parolin Safe Homes Program



I think what stands out about this partnership is a real willingness to do something different from maybe what's intended with the program or how people might perceive something like an STV program. It's that willingness to look at what women are really needing. — Laurie Kohl, STV Counsellor/Coordinator, Family Services of the North Shore





Hey, we've got these resources here. Why aren't we using them for more than what the traditional program has allowed for? —



Staff Sergeant Warren Dosko, Detachment
Commander of the Princeton RCMP



Guiding Principles for Effective Partnerships

- Partnerships should support shared priorities and the principle of shared responsibilities.
- All partners must be equally committed to the success of the partnership arrangement and be prepared to share its risks and benefits.
- The partnership arrangement should be tailored to specific purposes and objectives, maximize the contribution of individual partners and add value to their respective efforts.
- All partners should clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and the results expected from the partnership.
- Partnerships imply a shared accountability and a cooperative investment of time and resources toward a common goal and a common set of expectations.
- Partnerships must be developed and implemented in an ethical manner, building on respect, trust and commonality of interests among partners.
- Managers and staff must be provided with clear policy direction, planning tools and flexible, innovative support to undertake partnerships with consistently high standards of quality and service to the public.
- The knowledge and expertise of practitioners must be shared to enable the partnership and each agency involved to continuously learn and improve from their insights.

Adapted from Environment Canada in Transition: Consultations and Partnerships: Working Together With Canadians, prepared for the Transition Team Steering Committee on Consultations and Partnerships, Environment Canada, 1992.

5.3 Some Final Tips for Success

Each partnership that we interviewed found that certain factors in particular contributed to their success. We share these quotations from our interviewees with the knowledge that they might not work in every situation.

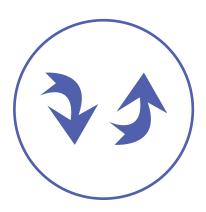
- ◆ The partnership was not imposed on us. We created and built it. We are committed to it.
- ◆ I have been a champion for this initiative. I created a sense of urgency.
- ◆ We have teamwork and open communication.
- ◆ There is a willingness to work together and we trust each other to follow through.
- ◆ The partnership came out of a larger group that we are accountable to.
- We have healthy personal relationships.
- Our service helps women with a lot of things; it's not fragmented.
- ◆ The partners work together in the same office.
- We prioritize quality of work over quantity.
- Our communication and process are structured (meetings, vision days) and recorded in writing.
- ◆ The partners don't have a turf war mentality.
- ◆ We accept the reality of the differences between us.
- ◆ We have paid administrative support.
- ◆ All local communities are involved, including the Aboriginal community.
- ◆ We have an easy camaraderie and we genuinely like each other.
- ◆ We use a lot of humour.
- ◆ We're flexible and informal.
- ◆ We hired the right people.
- ◆ We keep reminding ourselves of our goal of keeping women safe.
- ◆ We made sure that the people at the table were those who could make decisions.



- ◆ Purpose: Partnerships that have a clear purpose and a mutual sharing of the benefits of partnership appear to have a greater potential for success. Partnerships that involve creating new solutions, are based on sustainable approaches and that encourage empowerment and self-determination within the parameters of the partnership are seen to have particular promise.
- ◆ Laying the foundation: When partnerships establish a good foundation, which includes a shared understanding of the purpose and function of partnership, and are built on a shared sense of commitment to and understanding of the need to work together (with clearly acknowledged lines of interconnection and interdependency), they are more likely to be successful.
- ◆ Shared principles/values: Shared principles and values that serve to clarify the relationship and foster empowerment, inclusion and efficacy are also cited as characteristics of successful partnerships. Trust, patience, respect, flexibility and pragmatism are also key elements.
- ◆ Working structure/processes: Creating an effective structure and process for partners to work together is also seen as important. This includes establishing a mandate and structure for partnership as well as boundaries; ensuring appropriate representation and facilitating the active involvement, engagement and participation of partners; addressing power and decision-making processes (including negotiation and conflict resolution mechanisms); and identifying and using mechanisms to communicate and share information. Ensuring accountability and including mechanisms to evaluate the partnership are also key considerations.
- ◆ Leadership: A number of authors suggest that leadership is an important aspect of successful partnerships.
- Public and political support (e.g. "champions") is also considered a key ingredient.
- ◆ Resources: To work effectively, partnerships need to have access to appropriate resources, including funding, trained staff and volunteers and other skills sets necessary to implement the partnership.

What Factors Contribute to Successful Partnerships?

The Partnership Study,
National Strategy on
Community Safety and
Crime Prevention,
Phase II,
Summary Report,
Justice Canada, 2002







6. The Partnership Toolkit

Part 6, the Toolkit, provides some partnership tools that the CCWS Project has developed based on our research. These can be copied and used as stand-alone exercises or handouts (please credit the CCWS Project when using these).

Contents

- 6.1. Solutions Management Exercise
- 6.2. Mission Statement Building Exercise
- 6.3. Sample Mission Statement and Objectives
- 6.4. Sample Partnership Agreement
- 6.5. Sample Memorandum of Agreement
- 6.6. On Finding Common Ground
- 6.7. Group Development Exercise Addressing Stereotyping
- 6.8. Sample Philosophical Agreement
- 6.9. Quiz: Do You Have a Partnership Positive Perspective?
- 6.10. List of Common Acronyms
- 6.11. Dimensions of Diversity: Values, Beliefs and Power Imbalances



Solutions Management Exercise

Solutions Management refers to a model for working at the local level to identify, analyze, and resolve issues that impact the safety of women experiencing violence. The model also provides a way to identify and track issues that require action at a regional, provincial, federal or other level. In British Columbia the model has evolved over the last 15 years through the work of Coordination Initiatives on violence against women, in conjunction with BC's Victim Services and Community Programs Division, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

Overview of Exercise:

This exercise will assist Coordination Initiatives to create a plan of action to address issues of concern identified by using the Solutions Management Model. At each stage in the process, your initiative is asked to discuss the suggested questions, allowing each member to offer the perspective and insight of their discipline. At the Visioning for Change stage in the process, you will have each member of your group offer a suggestion for a "best practice" solution. The object of the exercise is to come to consensus on a vision for a "best practice" based on the full discussion in which each participant's experience is heard and incorporated into the solution, and then to go on and develop a plan of action to reach that goal.

In this exercise "best practice" is synonymous with the solution that creates the most safety for an assaulted woman. Regardless of the discussion focus, the analysis and outcome must always be from the point of view of victim safety. Notice in your discussions how your definitions of "safety" vary.

1. Analyze the issue

Consider the following questions in your discussions:

- ◆ What are the practical problems that give rise to your concern? (How do they impede women's safety/offender accountability?)
- ◆ Does the concern arise from an individual case/occurrence, or does it represent a larger systemic problem? (i.e. the same problem has occurred in a number of cases)
- ◆ Does the concern have to do with an administrative process, flow of information, etc.?
- ◆ Does the concern indicate a need for more training?
- ◆ Is the concern a result of an "attitude" about violence against women, an assumption or belief?



- ◆ Is the concern or problem a result of improper referrals?
- ◆ Can the concern be addressed at a local level, or does it require a higher level of authority?

2. Vision for change

Visioning requires "starting with the end in mind" and together discussing the optimal outcome. As a group ask yourselves: "What is the best possible solution?" Define this solution in concrete terms, e.g. "every assaulted woman receives a swift, sensitive and appropriate referral to an agency that can provide her with information about her rights and options for support."

3. Develop a plan

Once you have identified the problem and defined your vision for change, begin a process of creating an action plan.

The following questions can be used to guide discussion:

- ◆ Practical issues: what can we do now (or have we done) to fix the situation, who will take action, by when, what is the agreed upon strategy?
- ◆ Systemic issues the problem represents: what long-term improvements can be made at the local level to address the problem?
- ◆ Does the problem represent a need for change at another level of authority? Can it be addressed through a regional authority (e.g. Police Boards, Regional Crown, Regional MCF, Regional Health Authority)? In BC, has the problem been communicated to the CCWS Project?
- ◆ Does the problem represent a need for action/response at a Provincial or Ministry level?
- ◆ Who will document the problem, best practices and plan, and how and to whom will that be communicated?

4. Monitor

It will be useful to determine at the outset what you will look for to determine your successes. You will want to evaluate your progress, and possibly make adjustments along the way. Don't be discouraged if you must revisit your original problem several times before achieving the level of success you had envisioned. A process of monitoring and evaluation is crucial to a substantial change process and may require ongoing work to overcome challenges and obstacles.

¹ Covey, Stephen, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, (1990)







MISSION STATEMENT BUILDING EXERCISE

[A company] is not a machine but a living organism and, much like an individual, it can have a collective sense of identity and fundamental purpose. This is the organizational equivalent of self-knowledge — shared understanding of what [the company] stands for, where it's going, what kind of world it wants to live in and, most importantly, how it intends to make that world a reality." ("The Knowledge-Creating Company" by Ikujiro Nonaka, Harvard Business Review, November-December 1991)

Mission

The mission statement explains the fundamental purpose of an organization or initiative. It gives the reason for the organization's existence. It answers the question "Why do we exist?" To develop a mission statement the overall question to be asked is "What are we here to do together?" Some more guiding questions in building a mission statement:

- 1. What is our purpose?
- 2. How do we behave?
- 3. Whom do we serve?

Vision

Sometimes, mission statements can include a vision statement to state a sense of direction. Such a statement says if we are true to our purpose today, what might be the result in the future. A vision statement answers the question "where are we going?"

Values and Beliefs

A mission and vision statement describes what the project/program is and what it proposes to do. A values and belief statement describes the beliefs that you hold to be true that you committed to carrying with you.

Sometimes groups work on values and beliefs statements separately from the MISSION STATEMENT. A beliefs statement is sometimes called "common ground" or "grounding assumptions." Values statements are usually referred to as "ground rules", "process guidelines" or "climate goals". Regardless of what we call them they are a crucial part of the formation of an organization or initiative, because the process of developing them together is key to creating a strong and coherent foundation from which to accomplish our goals. The articulation of our values and beliefs can act as a template or guide that will guide our decisions and assist in how we perform our duties and relate to the group. Our activities should reflect our beliefs and values in practice (what we do) and process (how we do it).





1.Why are we here?
2.What do we stand for?
3.Where are we going?

To develop your mission statement:

- 1. Do a separate brainstorm on each of the above three questions. Record everything on three sheets of flipchart paper.
- 2. Go through your lists together and categorize the 20 most important words under the following headings:

Action	How	Where	Who	When	What	Missing

(The "missing" column is for words you find you need to complete your mission statement that you haven't found on your flipcharts.)

3. Using these 20 words, write your mission statement, ensuring it answers the above three questions.

You may use this same process for revisiting and revising your existing mission statement.

References for this exercise include:

The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization, by P. Senge, R. Ross, B. Smith, C. Roberts and A.Kleiner

The Strategic Process, by Henry Mintzberg and James Brian Quinn

Building a Learning Organization, by Rick Dufour and Robert Eaker

Thanks also to: Nancy Gale, Director, Williams Lake, BC, Child Development Centre.





SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT

The Coordination Initiative ensures a coordinated community and justice system response to those affected by violence against women in relationships and sexual assault.

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To be inclusive, and advocate equal treatment for all people accessing services, while being sensitive to the challenges of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and/or abilities of individuals.
- ◆ To establish and maintain an efficient forum for communication and information sharing between community and justice system agencies regarding violence against women in relationships and sexual assault.
- ◆ To ensure consistent implementation of the relevant policies and protocols, including this Coordination Initiative's community protocols and the Attorney General's VAWIR Policy, through education and ongoing monitoring of community and justice system responses.
- ◆ To identify and seek solutions to particular barriers that prevent or impede full access to community and justice systems for all those affected by the issues of violence against women in relationships and sexual assault.
- ◆ To identify problem and gaps in services and potential measures to address them.
- ◆ To communicate the work of the committee and information shared within our own agencies and to the larger community.
- ◆ To promote and support professional training regarding the issues of violence against women in relationships and sexual assault.
- ◆ To increase awareness in the community regarding the issues and dynamics of the issues of violence against women in relationships and sexual assault, including practical information regarding what community members can do to take action.
- ◆ To periodically revisit our mandate, effectiveness and responsiveness in light of the needs of our community.
- ◆ To advocate and seek core funding for the work of this coordination initiative.

Adapted from documents of the Prince George and Surrey, B.C. Coordination Initiatives on Violence Against Women.





SAMPLE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

(Adapted from *The Partnership Toolkit: Tools for Building and Sustaining Partnerships*, prepared by the Collaboration Roundtable, 2001)

Structure can have a profound impact on a partnership's success. Community-building organizations often believe that in order to create an inclusive, democratic partnership, formal structure should be kept to a minimum. As a result, they tend to use open and flexible processes rather than developing explicit and enforceable rules and guidelines for interaction between the partners.

This tendency toward structurelessness contributes to many problems that frequently plague community-based partnerships: difficulties attracting and retaining an economically and racially diverse membership, lack of accountability among participants, dependence of the group on a small handful of core leaders and communication problems among members.

In partnerships among organizations and institutions, lack of formal structure undermines mutual accountability and limits the potential for meaningful cooperation. Without enforcable rules of interaction, organizational partnerships often take the form of loose networks nather than functional collaborations.—"Building Effective Partnerships: The Process and Structure of Collaboration," Kristina Smock, Shelterforce Online, May/June 1999

INTRODUCTION

The following represents a Partnership Agreement between
and
The purpose of this Agreement is to clarify our relationship, thereby enabling us to work together in a cooperative manner.
The partnership will be in place for the period from
to
The Agreement may be modified at any time if both partners agree to the changes
THE PARTNERS
This section will help to ensure that we understand each other, and that we allow for differences in our respective organizational cultures as well as building on our similarities.
and are
distinct organizations each with its own vision, mandate, priorities, organizational culture and operational practices.



Description of Partners	
Partner #1	
Goals and Objectives:	
Mandate:	
Community Served:	
Recent Accomplishments:	
Structure:	
Staff positions:	
Decision-making process:	
Partner #2	
Goals and Objectives:	
Mandate:	
Community Served:	
Recent Accomplishments:	
Structure:	
Staff positions:	
Decision-making process:	

COMBINING OUR STRENGTHS AND ADDRESSING OUR DIFFERENCES: (brainstorm with all partners)

Similarities:

Ways our work is similar:	The partnership could build on these similarities by:

Differences:

We recognize that differences in organizational values and work style may create conflict in a partnership. Therefore as with our similarities, we want to identify both our differences and the strategies we will use to minimize their impact. (The following are examples of differences that could exist within a partnership and of the strategies the partners could use to minimize the impact of these differences.)

Examples of Differences

- One organization has more formal reporting systems for staff than the other does.
- One is strongly committed to political action and advocacy and the other to political neutrality.
- One employs formal accounting practices and cannot modify these for any program in which it is involved, while the other operates more informally.
- One serves all people while the other focuses on a particular cultural community
- Other:

Examples of Strategies

- ◆ The partners will collaborative decide on a reporting system that is flexible yet accountable enough to meet the needs of both partners
- ◆ The partners will come to agreement about whether the mandate of the partnership requires political action and advocacy and if so, which of the partners will take the lead in this work.

Some differences that could create conflict for the partners: (joint brainstorm with all partners)

Difference	Compatibility Strategy: how will we ensure these differences do not become problems:



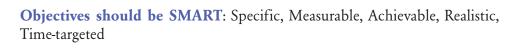
VISION AND OBJECTIVES (a brainstorm with all partners)

As partners, our vision for this partnership is: (A vision describes what we seek to create. It is a picture of the future.)

As partners, our objectives for this project are: (Objectives should be specific, measurable and practical so that we know what we want to achieve and whether we



are achieving it. They should focus on outcomes and results rather than activities, i.e. on what we will accomplish rather than on how we will work or what we will do. We will measure our progress toward these goals and objectives and we will evaluate our success in achieving these on the basis of the following indicators).





Objectives	Indicators

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability implies a contract, in this case between the partners. Each has rights, responsibilities and obligations for which they are accountable. In a partnership, the partners are accountable for achieving their objectives and for working in a climate of collaboration and respect.

This chart is to be completed with all partners present:

Effective accountability is based upon five principles:	Partner #1	Partner #2
1. Clear roles and responsibilities. In an accountable relationship, partners' roles and responsibilities should be well understood and agreed upon. This clarity is key to an accountable partnership	Person: Role: Responsibilities:	Person: Role: Responsibilities:
What are each of the partners' roles and responsibilities?		·
2. Clear and realistic expectations. Expectations have to be clear, reasonable and realistic. You cannot be expected to achieve something – and be responsible for achieving it – if it is entirely unrealistic. Are the partners' expectations reasonable and realistic?	Expectations:	Expectations:



3. Expectations balanced with resources. Expectations need to be realistic relative to the resources (authority, skills and funding) available to each partner. A partner likely cannot achieve its objectives if it does not have adequate resources for doing so. Do you have the resources that you need to do the job?	Resources offered:	Resources offered:
4. Credible reporting. Credible, useful and timely information should be provided in order to demonstrate what has been achieved. Reporting can be ongoing, periodic or both. How will you report on your activities and accomplishments?	Reporting:	Reporting:
5. Reasonable adjustment. After reviewing their performance relative to expectations, partners should be prepared to learn from the review and to adjust their activities and their partnership accordingly. If you did not achieve your objectives, why not? This is a matter of "closing the loop." How will you implement what you have learned?	Adjustments made?	Adjustments made?

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND REPORTING

The partners recognize that the organization that is sponsoring the initiative and therefore holds the contract (Contract Holder) bears the most significant legal and financial risks in this relationship. For sake of clarity, the partners affirm that each:

- * is an independent organization acting together only within the terms of this Partnership Agreement;
- cannot be directly responsible, beyond the reporting terms identified above, for the expenditures or actions undertaken by the other;
- will establish time records and books of account, invoices, receipts and vouchers of all expenses in accordance with standard accounting practices, where appropriate;
- will not, without the prior written consent of the partner, assign either directly or indirectly, any responsibilities assigned under the Contract or this Partnership Agreement to a subcontractor or other third party.

It is further agreed that:

- the Contract Holder is the legal employer of staff;
- revenue and expenditure statements will be prepared every three months and be provided to all the partners;
- any expenditure not previously outlined in the budget of more than (dollar level) will require the approval of the partners;
- the (name of partner) will receive (identify an appropriate percent, if applicable) of total value of the contract to defray the costs associated with its administrative, accounting and audit responsibilities;
- the Contract Holder is responsible for payment of all invoices promptly, in accordance with all laws and legislation;
- the project's financial records will be audited by (name of auditor or accountant);and
- each organization's conflict of interest provisions will apply to this project.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The partners are committed to working in a cooperative manner and recognize that this requires a commitment of time and energy. Where differences arise, the partners agree:

To address their differences in a timely, open and honest manner



- ❖ To attempt to resolve issues directly at the staffing level at which they occur
- To bring those issues which cannot be otherwise resolved to either a regular or a special meeting of the partners
- To engage the Boards of Directors of the partner organizations if other conflict resolution processes fail
- ❖ If appropriate, to engage an independent mediator or evaluator to assess the partnership and/or the situation either when required or as part of a formal evaluation

EVALUATION

The Contract Holder *may* arrange for the project to be evaluated in a professional manner, based on the objectives and indicators identified above.

DISSOLUTION IN CASES OF DISPUTE

The partners acknowledge that if their relationship is no longer viable it may be detracting from their efforts to achieve the program's goals and objectives. If such occurs and issues cannot be satisfactorily resolved following the process identified above, the partners agree to dissolve the relationship, honourably and without ill will, following:

- Discussion of the situation and of alternatives to the current arrangements with all parties and their Boards of Directors
- * Notice being served, in writing, to all parties
- And a transition period of (number of) months

At termination the partnership will:

- Identify the partnership's major accomplishments and acknowledge those people and organizations who have contributed to these accomplishments
- Determine how to inform people both inside and outside the partnership - of the decision to terminate
- Document the partnership's history and the lessons which can be drawn from its operation
- Recommend an appropriate alternative to the current partnership
- Select a time, place and event to celebrate what has been accomplished and to move on.



DISSOLUTION

At the end of one year (date), the partners will prepare a final report on their partnership. It will include the following.

Partnership Final Report

Issues	To be completed by the partners:
When was the partnership initiated? What were its goals and objectives?	
What were the partnership's major accomplishments?	
Who contributed to these accomplishments?	
What lessons can we learn from the partnership's successes?	
What lessons can we learn from the partnership's shortcomings?	

At dissolution, the partners will:

- ◆ Inform the funder, in writing
- Provide copies of the final program and financial report to the management
- ◆ Committee, funder and others as appropriate
- ◆ Organize the files and other records so the project and partnership's history is not lost
- ◆ Inform all stakeholders, including Boards of Directors, staff and clients as appropriate
- ◆ Host a "moving on" celebration for partnership staff, managers and funders

Signatories

Signed this day of	, by:		
	on behalf of (Contract Holder)		
	on behalf of (partner)		



SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

- 1. X, Y, and Z agree to collaborate on the three-year project entitled, "Project A", as described in the attached document.
- 2. X will be the lead agency: reporting to THE FUNDER, managing the finances, facilitating the work of the local project team, and resolving project conflicts.
- 3. Each agency's local project staff will collaborate in a local project team.
- 4. Each agency will serve on the project steering committee: setting plans, evaluating the work, and resolving disputes where necessary.
- 5. No party will bear any financial or legal liability for the actions of the other parties. In this regard, it is recognized that X, Y, and Z are each independent organizations acting together only within the terms of this Memorandum of Agreement.
- 6. The project steering committee will develop the budget for the project on an annual basis. The first year budget is attached.
- 7. Y and Z will each invoice X for 50% of their share of the project's first year budget at the beginning of the project, which will be paid upon the signing of this agreement.
- 8. Y and Z will each invoice X for 50% of their share of the project's second year budget at the beginning of the second year, which will be paid after payment has been received by X from THE FUNDER for the second year.
- 9. Y and Z will each invoice X for 50% of their share of the project's third year budget at the beginning of the third year, which will be paid after payment has been received by X from THE FUNDER for the third year.
- 10. At the end of each year of the project, Y and Z will each submit to X an activity report and a financial report for the project for the year. These reports will be submitted in sufficient time to allow X to meet any reporting deadlines established by THE FUNDER.
- 11. The annual financial report will detail the expenses of the partner for the project for the year, as per the agreed upon budget, and will include copies of all receipts and a breakdown of project staff costs.
- 12. After receipt of the annual project report and an accompanying invoice, X will pay to each of Y and Z the lesser of their actual expenses for the project for the year, after deducting the initial 50% advance for the year, or 50% of their respective annual budget for the project.



13	.Y and Z each agree to return to X any portion of the amounts paid to	them
	for the project that has not been expended on the project by the end	of the
	three-year term.	

For X	Dated
For Y	Dated
For 7	Dated

PROJECT A

FIRST YEAR BUDGET				
	Х	Y	Z	TOTAL
Project Coordination				
Project Staff ²				
Project Costs ³				
Administration				
TOTAL				

² Salaries, benefits, training, etc. ³ Facilities, travel, supplies, child care, etc.



On Finding "Common Ground"

An Exercise for Coordination Initiatives



"There has been a shift from linear thinking (in science) to systems thinking – for example, the shift from seeing things as structures to seeing them as processes. A tree is not an object, but an expression of processes, such as photosynthesis, which connect the sun and the earth. The same is true of our bodies, our jobs, our organizations, and ourselves." — Belonging to the Universe, Fritz Capra



A Coordination Initiative (on violence against women) is, like an "organization", an expression of processes interrelating with one another. A member of a Coordination Initiative brings not only themselves to the process, but the knowledge, attitudes, values and mandates of their discipline as well. These are likely to be very diverse and if not discussed can block the group from working effectively as a team.

Creating Synergy

All of us at one time or another have been part of a great team. It may have been through sports, in a school play, or perhaps through work. What we remember about these experiences is the trust, the relationships, the comfort and acceptance for an exchange of ideas. This is the "synergy" teams strive to create. Through intentional dialogue, focused on creating a learning environment for everyone involved, a cross-discipline synergy can be created. This can be a powerful force when addressing the many and multiple-layered intersections that affect a woman's safety.

Balancing Process and Product

As we acknowledge the work of a Coordination Initiative as a process and method for increasing women's safety (the product), we must acknowledge that how members of the Coordination Initiative work together (the process) is the key ingredient in the quality of the product — how well we improve safety for women.

Finding Common Ground

The following is a process tool for Coordination Initiatives to use to build "common ground". Such a process will contribute to a collaboratively built foundation from which synergy can grow. The exercise is designed to help a group develop a set of "beliefs we have in common" from a brainstorm on common assumptions.





EXERCISE

BRAINSTORM: Each of us has assumptions about violence against women, such as why it happens and what will stop it. Ask the group what their assumptions are and record on a flipchart.

A sample assumption might be: "Men abuse women because they drink too much".

OPTION ONE:

Go through each assumption and discuss in large group - find consensus on accepting or rejecting the assumption.

- ◆ If time permits and the group is willing, do two rounds for each of the assumptions (if not, perhaps do one round of both questions):
 - * The way I understand this assumption is:
 - * I would change/eliminate it. Change, how?
- ◆ Edit the accepted assumption—discuss adopting the assumption as "a belief we have in common"

OPTION TWO:

Break the group into smaller groups — have each small group find consensus on accepting or rejecting 3 of the assumptions and present to the large group.

- ◆ Small groups do two rounds for each of the assumptions:
 - * The way I understand this assumption is:
 - ❖ I would change/eliminate it. Change, how?
- ◆ Edit the accepted assumption—discuss adopting the assumption as "a belief we have in common"
- ◆ Report back to larger group—discuss adopting the assumption as "a belief we have in common"

Developing a set of common beliefs is an essential step in a workplan for building a well functioning Coordination Initiative.



Group Development Exercise: ADDRESSING STEREOTYPING

Group members put their professional designations or job titles at the top of a flipchart page. Then they quickly write down all of the negative and positive stereotypes that others hold about that person or profession (5 minutes). The sheets are posted on the wall and each group member adds stereotypes to the others' lists (10 minutes). Finally each participant says how it feels to see these stereotypes (about 2 minutes each). The group can then discuss the effect of stereotypes on their work together.

From: "Beginning with Us: A Collaborative Approach to Domestic Violence," *The Mountain and Beyond, Interdisciplinary Project on Domestic Violence*, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 1993.







SAMPLE PHILOSOPHICAL AGREEMENT

Violence Against Women In Relationships Coordinating Committee For Abbotsford, Matsqui And Mission

Grounding Assumptions About Violence Against Women

- 1. This committee will be focused on violence against women in relationships.
- 2. Violence is: 1) any physical contact intended to harm, control or intimidate and/or 2) any unwanted physical contact and/or 3) any psychological or behavioural tactics or threats used to control and instil feelings of fear, intimidation, powerlessness, degradation and isolation.
- 3. In most aspects of our society, women are not in equal positions of power to men. This power imbalance reinforces violence against women in relationships.
- 4. Violence against women also occurs in same sex relationships.
- 5. Violence against women is a crime and we support and encourage a criminal justice system response.
- 6. Violence against women is also a pervasive social problem and we support and encourage a coordinated social service response.
- 7. Violence against women in relationships is always an unacceptable choice of behaviour for which the perpetrator has sole responsibility.
- 8. Women stay in or return to abusive relationships for a variety of reasons: love, children, cultural values, religious beliefs, socio-economic conditions, low self-esteem, isolation and fear of escalating violence when they attempt to leave the relationship.
- 9. Violence against women in relationships crosses all ethnic, socio-economic and religious boundaries. Initiatives to address violence against women must be sensitive to the culture and religion of the individuals involved, as well as any socio-economic and/or language barriers.
- 10. Violence against women in relationships has a destructive and long-lasting impact on children, family relationships and the individual.
- 11. It is the violence that is responsible for the breakdown of the relationship, not the intervention.
- 12.A coordinated response will ensure immediate, consistent and reliable intervention by the justice system and the agencies providing health and social services and have the safety of the women and children as its utmost priority.





Quiz: Do you have a Partnership-Positive Perspective Yes No I respect the organization that we're partnering with. I recognize the unique elements that each partner brings to the partnership. I am open to the partnership changing its form depending on the needs of our clients, the community or the partners. I know that every partnership will be different, depending on the partners, the context, the timing, etc. My main focus is on the safety of women. I believe that the priority for the partnership is working together to improve women's safety in practical ways; hammering out philosophical differences between the partners is less important. I am committed to working hard on the partnership. I will take time to attend to the partnership. I am open to informal process-e.g. just picking up the phone to check in with a partner, instead of needing to arrange a formal meeting. I know that safety for women can take many different forms, from a protection order to a ride home from work, and I am open to responding to women's specific needs. I know that unexpected factors may contribute to the good health of my partnership - like maybe I happen to be neighbours with one of the people in the partnering organization and I will stay aware of these factors and take advantage of them. I will focus on what my partner and I have in common. I am keen to learn from other partnerships. I am willing to provide leadership within the partnership and the community. I am open to having a "test period" at the beginning of the partnership, so that we can assess how we're doing. I am patient, and willing to build relationships slowly and steadily. I am willing to do as much planning as necessary. I feel keen and energized. I look forward to using my imagination and being creative. I am not "territorial" about the work of my agency. Rather, I am interested in sound community and organizational development agreements where mandates are clear and respected. I am prepared for the fact that building this partnership may be a long, slow process. I am open to hearing my partner's concerns. I do not need to change my partner. I am aware of and acknowledge the power I have and am committed to reducing any

Scoring: Give yourself one point for each "yes."

unhealthy power imbalances.

1-11: You may need to reconsider entering into this partnership. Do you need to adjust your attitude?

Or is this maybe just not the right people, time or place for this partnership?

12-19: This might work, but it sounds like you might need some more prep time.

20-24: Go for it! It sounds like this partnership will be grand!







List of Common British Columbia Acronyms

This list was developed by the CCWS Project to assist those working in the anti-violence sector in British Columbia. You may want to develop your own list to help all those involved in your partnership to know what commonly-used acronyms stand for.

BC CEAS	British Columbia Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors
BCAAFC	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
BCASVACP	British Columbia Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs
BCIAFV	BC Institute Against Family Violence
BCYSTH	BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses
СВА	Canadian Bar Association
CIC	Criminal Injuries Compensation
ccws	Community Coordination For Women's Safety (a project of the BCASVACP)
COPS	Citizens on Patrol
CRIAW Ca	anadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women
CRN	Community Response Network
DAWN Can	ada DisAbled Women's Network Canada
DVHI	Domestic Violence Health Initiative
DVU Dor	nestic Violence Unit (at the Vancouver Police Department)
E Division	The BC division of the RCMP
EAW	Employment Assistance Worker
FREDA F	eminist Research Education Development & Action Centre (at Simon Fraser University)
i/c	DOMB in all and the Officers in Classes
1/ C	RCMP: in charge (as in Officer in Charge)
JIBC	Justice Institute of BC
-	

LSS	Legal Serv	ices Society
MAG	Ministry of Attori	ney General
MCAWS	Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Wome	en's Services
MCF	Moving Coordination	on Forward
MCFD	Ministry of Children and Family D	evelopment
MPSSG	Ministry of Public Safety and Solici	tor General
NAC	National Action Committee on the Status	of Women
NCO	Non-Commission	ned Officer
NCPC	National Crime Preven	tion Centre
NCRMD	Not Criminally Responsible due to Ment	al Disorder
NGO	Non-Government O	rganization
NORTHE		nstitute for Evaluation
OAITH	Ontario Association of Internal and Transit	ion Houses
PAFNW	Pacific Association of First Nation	ons Women
РО	Probat	ion Officer
POR	Protection Ord	ler Registry
RCC	Report to Crow	wn Counsel
RNABC	Registered Nurses Association of Britisl	1 Columbia
S/SGT	Sta	aff Sergeant
STV	Stopping the Violence (Counsellin for women who have been abused, funded l	- -
UBCM	Union of BC Mu	ınicipalities
TH	Transi	tion House
VACAN	Victim Assistan	nce Canada
VAP	Victim Assistan	ce Program
VAWIR	Violence Against Women in Ro	elationships
VCASAA	Vancouver Custody and Acce and Advocacy	
VIR	Violence in Re	elationships
VOCA	Victims of	Crime Act
VSCPD	Victim Services and Community Programs Divisi	ion, MPSSG







DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY: VALUES, BELIEFS & POWER IMBALANCES

Teaching points and exercise adapted from the Community Leadership Training (developed by the Justice Institute of BC and the Community Coordination for Women's Safety Project with funding from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Victim Services and Community Programs)

Introduction

One of the many factors that gets in the way of effective group functioning is the lack of acknowledgement of the varying degrees of power and privilege among group members. The power and privilege held by some can block the equal involvement of all. The following information is based in part on Peggy McIntosh's article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack."

Teaching Points: Privilege

- 1. "Unearned advantages" and "privilege" refer to the advantages and privileges that are acquired as a result of being a member of a particular group in our society, for example, white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, etc., rather than resulting from merit or personal achievements.
- 2. Privilege and unearned advantages take both active forms, which we can see, and embedded forms, which we are taught not to see.
- 3. Members must also be sensitive to the privileges and advantages within particular groups. For example, a well-educated South Asian woman counsellor may have many more privileges and advantages than her illiterate refugee client from the same village.
- 4. Before you can integrate diversity and inclusion into your coordinating committee, everyone must first acknowledge how their own privilege and unearned advantages may influence their perspectives and points of view related to violence against women as well as their treatment of those from diverse or minority groups who sit on the committee.
- 5. A change in mindset is required—overcoming privilege is more than merely believing that all minority groups are equal, it requires actively challenging and exposing processes, practices and procedures that overtly or covertly bestow privilege on a few.

Understanding White Privilege

If you have privilege you can count on the following conditions:

- ◆ You can turn on the television or open the newspaper to the front pages and see people like you widely represented.
- When you are told about Canadian heritage or about civilization worldwide you are shown that people of your colour made it what it is.





- ◆ You can count on your skin colour not working against the appearance of financial reliability.
- ◆ You do not have to educate your children to be aware of systemic discrimination for their own daily physical protection.
- ◆ You can speak in public without putting your race on trial.
- ◆ You are never asked to speak for all of the people of your group.
- ◆ You can do well in a challenging situation without being considered a credit to your race.
- ◆ You can be pretty sure that if you ask to speak to the person in charge they will be of the same race.
- You can be reasonably sure that walking hand in hand with your lover will not be a dangerous activity.
- You can take a job with an equal opportunity employer without having your co-workers suspect that you got the job because of your race or gender.
- ◆ You can think over many options—social, political, or professional—without asking whether a person like you would be accepted or allowed to do what you want to do.
- ◆ You can be late for a meeting without the lateness reflecting on your race.
- ◆ You can choose public accommodation/entertainment without fearing that people like you cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places you have chosen.

Unpacking my Invisible Knapsack

Generate three or four examples for your assigned group for as many of the following statements as possible.

The following privileges/advantages allow me to feel at home in the world and welcome wherever I go....

The following privileges/advantages allow me to receive help and access services whenever I need them...

The following privileges/advantages allow me to escape dangers or penalties, which others may be at risk or suffer...

The following privileges/advantages allow me to avoid feeling anxious, fearful and distrustful when faced with situations involving persons in positions of authority...

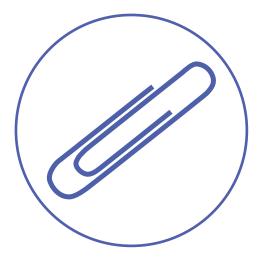
The following privileges/advantages allow me to ignore, dominate or exert power over others...



7. Appendices

Contents

- 7.1. Inspirations for Coordination: Jurisdictions That Led the Way
- 7.2. Findings on the Importance of Coordination from Research and Coroners' Inquests
- 7.3. Bibliography





INSPIRATIONS FOR COORDINATION: JURISDICTIONS THAT LED THE WAY

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) Duluth, Minnesota

The DAIP was started in 1980 and has become one of the most influential models in North America for responding to violence against women. It was the "first community-based reform project to successfully negotiate an agreement with the key intervening legal agencies" (Shepard and Pence). Its policies and procedures effectively limited workers' discretion and held all responders to minimum standards. The DAIP made history by developing a mandatory arrest policy in the early 1980s and a men's treatment program that focused on power and control. Many communities in the United States and Canada have used the "Duluth model" or their own version of it to respond to violence against women.

The London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse (LCCEAW)

London, Ontario

The LCCEAW was also begun in 1980 in an attempt to improve the community's response to violence against women. The first meetings were attended by police, prosecution, probation and court administration from family and criminal courts. The transition house also attended, as well as a group that had been started in 1972, Police Family Consultants, to help police deal with family issues, including violence against women. The meetings were started by researchers from the London Family Court Clinic. In the early 1980s, the LCCEAW made a number of recommendations that were adapted by the local police and legal system and that improved the community's response to violence against women. Like the DAIP, the London model has been adapted by other communities around the world.

The Victoria Violence Against Women in Relationships Coordination Committee Victoria, British Columbia

The Victoria Committee was one of the original Violence Against Women Coordination Committees in British Columbia. Since the inception of the committee in 1988 it has had a significant impact on Victoria's response to violence against women. The committee, led by the local community-based victim assistance program, has representation from Crown; Legal Services; police-based victim services; police agencies (including the municipal and military departments and RCMP detachments); Victoria probation; assaultive men's treatment; Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD); transition house and second stage housing; the Intercultural Association; the Family Justice Centre and the Military Family Resource Centre.



A recent success involved a study that was requested by the members and conducted by the committee coordinators. The study examined cases where men arrested on an allegation of spousal assault or harassment against their partners, were released from the police jurisdiction on a Promise To Appear with a Undertaking Given to a Peace Officer or Officer In Charge. These cases were compared to cases where men were arrested and released from court after a bail hearing. The study included a number of research questions that broadened the scope of the study. Various recommendations were written following the study. One of the recommendations was to develop guidelines to assist the police in their practice. This recommendation became an initiative to aid police across the province and resulted in the creation of procedural guidelines, *Police Release On A Promise To Appear With An Undertaking in Violence Against Women in Relationships Cases* (February 2005), along with a training curriculum.

The development of the guidelines and the training curriculum was a collaboration between Police Services Branch and included representation from the Spousal Assault Program, Victim Services and Community Programs Division of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, RCMP "E" Division, the Saanich and Vancouver Police Departments and The BC Institute Against Family Violence.



Direct service workers should be encouraged to be at the coordination table and bring issues forward. Coordination Committees are a positive benefit to the work that they do — a tool and a source of solutions. — Wendy Walsh, Co-chair, Victoria Violence Against Women in Relationships Coordination Committee





FINDINGS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COORDINATION FROM RESEARCH AND CORONERS' INQUESTS

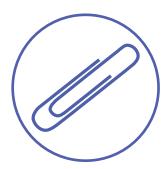
Recent coroners' reports and research have confirmed much of what our own work has told us about the importance of a coordinated response to violence against women.

Excerpts From: Final Report of the Ad Hoc Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group Reviewing Spousal Abuse Policies and Legislation, 2002

- ◆ Specific initiatives will continue to have limited impact without a coordinated consistent broad-based policy response across sectors. It is recognized that the justice system cannot, and should not, address this problem on its own.
- ◆ Uncoordinated efforts will continue to result in waste of scarce resources, duplication of effort, disillusionment of staff working within systems, unmet public expectations and, most detrimentally, compromised victim protection.
- ◆ It is recommended that jurisdictions support and strengthen, with senior level commitment, coordination of initiatives to respond to family violence within and outside departments of justice that include multiple government and community stakeholders.
- ◆ Evaluation data in Canada suggest that an integrated strategy has a positive impact on criminal justice system performance. In Nova Scotia, data comparing the performance of the criminal justice system before and after the introduction of a procharge, pro-prosecution policy framework (which included training and accountability measures) demonstrated significant improvement in key performance indicators such as charge, arrest and conviction rates.

Excerpts From: Measures of Empowerment for Women Who are Victims of Violence and use the Justice System, 2001. (Unpublished report prepared by M. Russell for the Victim Services Division, BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)

- ◆ In general, the more coordinated the response, the greater the deterrent affect on assailants and the safer the victim.
- ◆ The evidence clearly indicates that coordination serves to maximize their (victims) safety, and thus is an important element in victim empowerment.
- ◆ A number of studies have highlighted the need for such coordination to keep victims safe and to assist them to get on with their lives. Several studies have observed that vic-





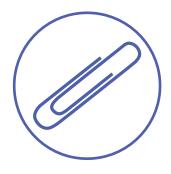
- tims were significantly less likely to be re-assaulted when enforcement of pro-arrest policies was coordinated with other criminal justice system responses.
- ◆ Furthermore, in a study of Denver domestic violence fatalities it was noted that closer collaboration between the criminal justice system and mental health services, substance abuse facilities and the medical community would serve to increase victim safety.
- ◆Victims thus can benefit from greater access to services when coordination between systems occurs. While police may recognize the necessity of such coordination, their behaviours do not always correspond to this awareness. Brown (1984) found that while over 80% of police agreed that referrals to social agencies should be made, in fact referrals were made in only 4% of cases.

Excerpts From: Inquest Into the Deaths of Arlene May and Randy Joseph Iles; Jury Verdict and Recommendations, 1998

- ◆ A "patchwork" of Victim Services have been formed throughout Ontario due to a lack of communication, cooperation and coordination. In order to provide a seamless program, it would be best if the private and public sectors worked not as competing interests, but together as partners. Their joint efforts would better coordinate all financial and human resources in the common goal of stopping domestic violence, which is at epidemic proportions.
- ◆ The government of Ontario should establish a committee, including equal numbers of Government and Community based members to oversee the implementation and coordination of the recommendations made as a result of this inquest.

Excerpts From: Working Toward a Seamless Community and Justice Response to Domestic Violence, a Five-Year Plan for Ontario. A Report to the Attorney General of Ontario by the Joint Committee on Domestic Violence, 1999

- ◆ We believe that improving our collective response to domestic violence is a long-term process requiring considerable commitment to training, resource allocation and coordination. The responsibility lies with individual service providers, agencies and services, local coordinating committees, communities, professional associations and the provincial government.
- Coordination of initiatives and the development of unified intervention and prevention plans must occur at four key levels: 1) within the community, social services and justice



- organizations; 2) at the community level; 3) between the government and the community; and 4) among ministries of the provincial government.
- ◆ The opportunity for intersectoral discussion of provincial initiatives and strategies, information sharing and networking and acknowledgement of 'best practices' is rare. However, these opportunities can provide a mechanism for coordination at the provincial level and a vehicle for renewed commitment by communities and services providers.

Excerpts From: Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence: Lessons from Duluth and Beyond, Sage Publications, 1999

- ◆ In rural areas, in particular, where victim access to services may be problematic, the necessity for coordination, and developing and maintaining cooperative relationships between police and community agencies was identified as a priority.
- ◆ Steinman (1990) used a before-an-after research design comparing a preintervention period (prior to a coordinated response) to an intervention period (when a coordinated response was being used). He found that arrests by police prior to a coordinated response led to more abuse but served as a deterrent after a coordinated response was initiated.

Excerpts from: Recommendations for Amendments to 'E' Division RCMP Operational Policies pertaining to Relationship Violence and the Processing of Firearms Applications. Report to the RCMP, 1998, by Justice Josiah Wood

(Background: During the early 1990s, Rajwar Gakhal and Sharon Velisek were attacked by their estranged husbands despite repeatedly reporting their partners' violent behaviour to police. Gakhal and nine other family members were killed by her ex-partner. Velisek was shot and seriously injured by her expartner who then shot himself. One of the critical issues that arose in these cases involved how RCMP should address the victims' reluctance to participate in a police investigation.)

◆ It is a notorious fact that many women who are victims of violence in a relationship find it impossible either to complain to the police when they are abused or to cooperate with a subsequent criminal investigation when that abuse finally comes to the attention of the police. All of the available research on the subject confirms that there are a host of complex reasons for this phenomenon, many if not most of which are related to the power imbalance that characterizes abusive relationships and leaves the woman victim convinced that she must suffer in silence. Such victims frequently feel shame or guilt and blame themselves for what they perceive to be their failure in making the relation-

ship a success. Many mistakenly believe that the abuse will stop, if only they try harder and become more compliant. All of these, and many more, complicating factors explain why the average woman in a violent relationship will suffer abuse as many as 35 times before making her first complaint to the police. It also explains why, when the courage to disclose the abuse to the police is finally mustered, many women ask that the suspect not be informed of the fact they have complained, that no investigation be conducted and that no charges be laid. Where such a "confidentiality" request is made it amounts to a request that the investigating officer not conduct a complete investigation.

- While PBVS [police based victim services] offer valuable assistance to all victims of crime, as previously noted those who staff the facilities located in police offices throughout the province are not generally trained or sufficiently experienced to address the specialized needs of women who are victims of relationship violence. On the other hand, community based transition houses, women's crisis centres and other specialized community based agencies are designed exclusively to serve the needs of women who are victims of relationship violence and are generally staffed by counsellors who have the training and experience necessary to meet those unique needs. For that reason, a referral to CBVS [community based victim services], rather than to PBVS, is more likely to provide a woman with the real support and encouragement she needs if she is to cooperate fully, both with the investigation her complaint will provoke and with the subsequent prosecution if charges are laid.
- ◆ In many cases, victims who complain to the police about incidents of relationship violence will require emotional support and counselling in order to deal effectively with the violence, in terms of fully understanding both the cycle of violence and the necessity of actively taking steps to ensure that cycle is broken. Although that support is essential for all victims of relationship violence, the need for specialized support and counselling is even more acute for a victim who, having complained to police about violence in her relationship, is nonetheless unable to support a resolution of the violence through the criminal justice system.
- ◆ I am of the view that whenever and wherever possible, the officer who receives and/or investigates a relationship violence complaint should refer the complainant to the appropriate community based victims services agency. This is particularly so if the woman is reluctant to cooperate with the investigation.

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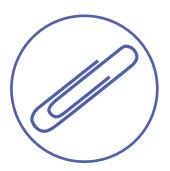
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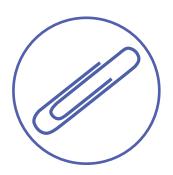
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