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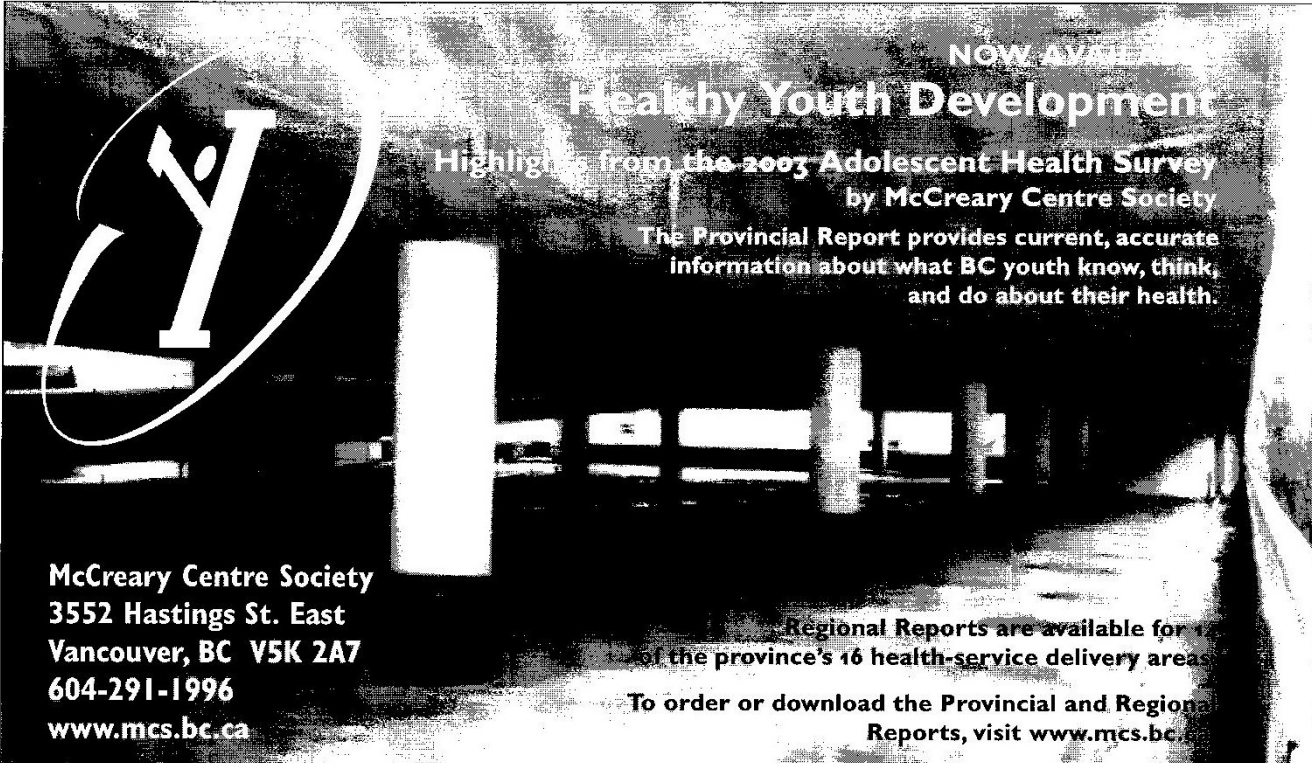
The Newsletter of the  
BC Institute Against Family Violence

VOLUME 11 · ISSUE 3 · FALL 2004



FAMILY VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS

BCIFV V.11(3) FALL 2004



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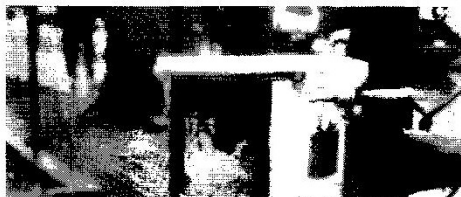
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This newsletter is published three times a year by the BC Institute Against Family Violence. Our vision is of a province and a society without family violence where individuals, families, and communities are caring, respectful, and supportive. In pursuit of our vision, the Institute's mission is to support, coordinate, and initiate research and education programs that promote the elimination of violence in all families. The Institute's goals are:

- To work to eliminate emotional abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, destruction of property, injury to pets, physical assault, sexual assault, and homicides in relationships of family, trust, or dependency.
- To work to eliminate victimization of all family members, particularly those who are more vulnerable than others because of their gender, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, physical condition, developmental capacity, mental health, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or related condition.
- To undertake research and disseminate the results through education for the identified client groups.
- To facilitate and coordinate interaction among various community, university, and government agencies.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Board of Directors or the staff of the BCIFV.

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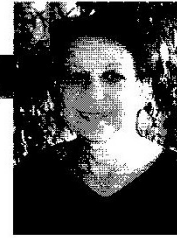
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## From the Chair

### *Rising to the Challenge*

As many of our readers know, there have been dramatic funding cuts particularly in the women-serving sector in British Columbia. Many valuable services and agencies are struggling to survive or have had to close their doors. The hardships faced by women, children, and families are increasing by the day and many of us are deeply concerned about the future.

Recently, the Institute was informed that its funding has been reduced by half. We as a board must now deal with the challenge of absorbing the impact of this drastic cut using all of our creative energy to develop a new, smaller but still viable organization. We are working closely with Penny Bain, our dedicated Executive Director, and our staff to ensure that we examine every possibility carefully. We plan to have a proposal completed in January. We are currently conducting meetings with key people in the

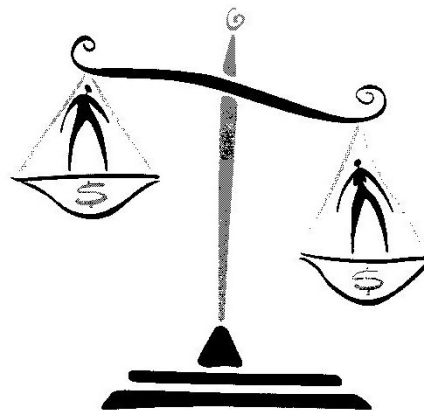
government and in the field to garner their ideas and hopefully their support in this endeavour.

The Institute has an excellent reputation and 15 years of stellar research, education, and resource development in the field. Our task now is to preserve our mandate in a way that makes sense in today's changing world and with today's shrinking resource base. We have a number of great ideas and I am optimistic that we will survive these changes, but not without a great deal of flexibility, hard work, and energy. If you have any thoughts on this matter, we would welcome them.

In the meantime, I wish to convey my appreciation to Penny, Jenny, Marion, and Patty who are weathering this storm with courage and dignity. I also wish to thank our board for rolling up its sleeves so that we can develop the best plan possible to meet our mandate in the future.

**We will survive  
these changes  
with flexibility,  
hard work, and  
energy.**

— *Frances Grunberg MSW RSW*  
*Chair*





## The New, the Old, and the Ongoing

We have begun a new fiscal year with the re-election of social worker and college instructor Ms. Fran Grunberg as Chair of the Institute's Board of Directors, and the elections of health researcher and university professor Dr. Colleen Varcoe as Vice Chair and psychologist Dr. George Tien as Secretary/Treasurer. We also welcome psychiatrist Dr. Susan Penfold to our board.

We are particularly grateful to retiring board member Dr. Derek Eaves, who first conceived of and founded the Institute. We bid goodbye and good luck to our departing members, thank our returning members for their renewed commitment, and welcome our new member as we embark on new projects, continue old ones, and confront the ongoing challenges that our work presents.

Under the heading of new projects, we are planning a series of colloquia on family violence and health in three to five centres across BC. Targeting health-care providers, anti-violence workers, and others whose work touches lives affected by family violence, this series will bring together researchers, policy analysts, and service providers to discuss the latest research on effective interventions to promote prevention of family violence and address its multi-faceted health impacts. Our goal is to encourage health-care managers and service providers to incorporate the latest understandings about the impact of family violence on health into their policies and practices.

A provincial roundtable discussion is the planned next step for the Children Exposed to Violence Best Practices Project reported in the last issue of *Aware*. The Working Group will assemble

50 to 60 service providers in support, counselling, psychological, and medical fields to discuss how to develop a coordinated approach to assisting children exposed to violence in their families.

The Institute also continues to facilitate the development of three versions of the *Aid to Safety Assessment and Planning (ASAP)* handbook, for victim-support workers, justice-system workers, and health-care providers. On October 18, six anti-violence service providers from around the province

will meet to discuss the draft manual for justice-system workers, designed to assist frontline workers in identifying risk and safety factors and directing abused women to those who can assist them in developing safety plans. Work has begun on a similar manual for health-care providers. All three manuals will be supported by a companion guide on protective measures available for abused women. To learn more about the project, contact the Executive Director

at [pbain@bcifv.org](mailto:pbain@bcifv.org).

Last but not least, as noted by our chair, we are facing significant financial challenges in the next fiscal year. The board and staff are assessing ways to reduce operating costs while continuing to strive toward our goals, such as examining ways to join forces with differently mandated but like-minded agencies. On this front, in August the Society for Children and Youth of BC moved into part of our office space and began sharing staff and some associated expenses with us. It is turning out to be a fortuitous partnership and we welcome their energy, ideas, and camaraderie as our two associations work side by side toward separate but complementary goals.

— Penny Bain

**We are grateful  
to retiring  
board member  
Dr. Derek Eaves,  
who founded  
the Institute.**



## More Than a Housing Problem

It may seem obvious to say that homelessness is first and foremost a function of poverty, but it is perhaps less obvious that homelessness is often a consequence of family violence. This is particularly true among segments of the population that comprise a rapidly growing share of the homeless: single women, women with dependent children, and youth.

As researchers have looked into why homelessness is so much more prevalent among these groups now than was apparently the case in the past, as well as how it is caused or exacerbated by factors such as family violence rather than simply being a result of a financial downturn, it has become increasingly obvious that a narrow definition of homelessness as house-lessness is inadequate.

Referring to the United Nations' definition of homelessness, Neal (2004: 32) describes it as "a social, psychological, and emotional construct revolving around the idea of home." However, she says, "[b]ecause of its construction as an idea, homelessness poses severe difficulties in terms of data collection and consequent policy and program directions. House-lessness, the UN Centre [for Human Settlements] argues, is a clearer though conceptually narrower term identifying the consistent aspect of homelessness that can be measured. What is most important about the UN definition of homelessness as house-lessness is that 'while homelessness is not just a housing problem, it is always a housing problem.'"

As the literature on homelessness develops—and, of more interest here, as the literature connecting family violence and homelessness develops—it is also becoming apparent that house-lessness is rarely "a sudden or unexpected event."

(Chung et al, 2000: 21) Rather, there is a progression from: being at risk of homelessness, perhaps by virtue of living in a home in which one is being abused and is economically dependent on the abuser; to moving frequently from one temporary housing situation to another, be it with family, or friends, or in a shelter; to being absolutely and visibly without a home.

Moreover, as researchers observe the growing presence of different segments of the population among the homeless, refine their definitions of homelessness, and analyze the factors that lead to homelessness, it becomes increasingly clear that the risk factors, manifestations, and consequences of homelessness are strongly tied to gender, age, race, sexual orientation, family history, language spoken, physical and mental ability, immigrant or refugee status, and so on. (McCracken, 2004; McCreary Centre, 2002; Neal, 2004; Rude and Thompson, 2001)

**Homelessness is one more reason to identify, address, and ultimately prevent family violence.**

With all this information comes the potential to create policy and allocate funding that will allow for identification of individuals at risk, and intervention in time to prevent homelessness and all its costly consequences. As well, from our perspective, comes one more reason to identify, address, and ultimately prevent the family violence that so often leads to homelessness.

In this issue of *Aware*, we offer five views that—in a tip-of-the-iceberg way—explore some of the connections between homelessness and family violence. To begin, Jill Hightower, retired Executive Director and current board member of the Institute, joins forces with Henry Hightower to provide an overview of salient characteristics of those

connections across the lifespan. Anna McCormick, who recently completed a literature review on homelessness among youth for the Institute, condenses key findings from her research addressing youth homelessness and family violence.

BCIFV board member Carol Seychuk offers a rural, northern perspective on family violence and homelessness in a part of BC where the harsh climate exacerbates the invisibility of homelessness and the difficulty of addressing it. Charlotte Mearns, who sits on the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, provides insights into the unique factors influencing the disproportional numbers of Aboriginal people in the homeless population as compared with the general population. And Shashi Assanand, also a BCIFV board member, looks at the different ways that homelessness manifests among immigrant, refugee, and visible/cultural-minority women.

Different researchers work with different definitions of, and ideas about, home-lessness; we include some of these in a sidebar on page 21. In addition, throughout this issue you will find brief stories of homelessness; our hope is that these stories express the kinds of details

that transform homelessness from a Social Problem into a condition that is real, unique, and poignant for each individual who experiences it. Refer below for complete source information for all of these citations.

Also throughout this issue are photos taken in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, where homelessness in all its manifestations is a fact of everyday life. We thank the McCreary Centre Society for allowing us to reprint these stark images from *Between the Cracks: Homeless Youth in Vancouver*. (2002) We also thank our authors for contributing their research and their words. Finally, we thank our readers for picking up this issue of *Aware*, and we hope that it will play a small role in increasing their awareness of the relationships between family violence and homelessness.

— Lynne Melcombe

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## More than Numbers

- Women form the majority of the poor in Canada; one in five Canadian women lives in poverty. In Canada, 25 percent of women with disabilities live in poverty compared to 18 percent of men, and 42.7 percent of Aboriginal women live in poverty compared with 35.1 percent of Aboriginal men. (McCracken, 2004: 3)
- In a study that involved 52 women in Durham Region, Ontario, 89 percent of participants described themselves as economically comfortable during their marriage, while 84 percent described themselves as low income after their separation. (SPARC BC, 2003: 32)
- In 1999, there were 29,000 more women with low incomes in Manitoba than men—a difference of 54 percent. In Manitoba, more than half of senior women who live alone are poor. And 31 percent of women who are visible minorities in Manitoba live in poverty. (McCracken, 2004: 3)
- Most homeless youth interviewed for the McCreary Centre Study have been physically or sexually abused. This is especially true of girls. One-third of homeless youth are in the sex trade. Aboriginal youth are more likely than others to be involved in high-risk activities such as the sex trade. (McCreary Centre, 2002: 60)
- One-third of homeless youth in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside are Aboriginal. Half have been in government care. Two-thirds have been convicted of a crime, and over half have spent time in custody. Amazingly—inspiringly—one-quarter of homeless youth are currently in school. (McCreary Centre, 2002: 60)

## Remembering Dr. Tanis Doe

BY BARBARA ANELLO



It is with deep sadness that I report the passing of Dr. Tanis Doe, advocate and educator. Tanis passed away in her home in Victoria, British Columbia late Wednesday, August 4, 2004 due to a pulmonary embolism. As a Métis

(Ojibway/French Canadian) Deaf woman with other disabilities who was active in disability, queer, and feminist movements internationally, she was widely respected as a disability-rights advocate and as an educator. Tanis is survived by her daughter, Ann Marie, and a loving community of friends, colleagues, mentees, lovers, dance partners, and family in every sense of the word.

Tanis began her teaching career in Jamaica in her late teens. It was at that time she adopted her daughter, Ann Marie. Tanis was a professor of social work and disability studies at the University of Victoria, and in recent years also taught at Royal Roads

College, Ryerson University, and the University of Washington. In 2003, she was a Fullbright Scholar in Bioethics at the University of Washington.

In addition to her teaching accomplishments, she has been the

principal researcher in many projects, including projects at the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers, Disabled Women's Alliance, University of

Washington, and the World Institute of Disability. Tanis was an innovative and influential researcher. She brought together diverse Deaf, disability, and people-of-colour communities in research; conducted pioneering research with Dick Sobsey on violence against people with disabilities; and developed national and international peer-training models for Deaf and disabled people. Her writing, training, and research in areas such as gender equity, assistive technology, education, employment, parenting, bioethics, violence and sexual

**In addition to teaching, research, and writing, Tanis was a lover of ballroom dancing.**

abuse, independent living, community organizing, and disability rights have created a legacy of work that will inform our community for generations. She was a prolific writer both under her given name and the pen name "Vicky D'aoust." In addition, Tanis was a lover of ballroom dancing, and competed in competitions and exhibitions around the world.

A memorial webpage with a guestbook has been set up by DAWN at <http://dawn.thot.net/tanis/>. Please visit the web page to read more about Tanis, enjoy some snapshots of her life, and make memorial contributions. In the meantime, drink a Snapple and plant a sunflower to remember and honour Tanis.

For inquiries, please contact Carrie Lucas at [clucas@disabilitypride.com](mailto:clucas@disabilitypride.com).

*Barbara Anello is Acting Chair of DAWN Ontario. She can be reached at [anello@vianet.ca](mailto:anello@vianet.ca) or through <http://dawn.thot.net>.*



# Relationships between Family Violence and Homelessness

*Causes and Consequences across the Lifespan*

BY HENRY C. HIGHTOWER AND JILL HIGHTOWER

In order to suggest some relationships between homelessness and family violence we begin with a definition of 'homeless' that applies to all ages, including those too young to leave home but who are perhaps homeless with their parent. Everyone, even the homeless, knows the meaning of 'home.' Home is where you are always welcome, where you are safe, and where you live alone or with the people closest to you, people you love and who love you. The true meanings of 'home' and 'homelessness' involve much more than shelter. For example, the United Nations definition of 'the homeless' includes people who lack "security of tenure" or "personal safety" in their dwellings. ([www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/i2ecohou.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/i2ecohou.htm))

Safety, security, and support are essential characteristics of a real home. Thus when a person is forced to remain in an abusive relationship because of dependence on their abuser for basic food, shelter, and other necessities, she or he is, in fact, homeless. If adequate income-support provisions and affordable housing were available, people in that position could leave their abusers. Nobody should have to choose between poverty and accepting abuse, but that choice is a reality for many, perhaps most, victims of family violence.

**Nobody should have to choose between poverty and accepting abuse.**

In the research on homelessness, a distinction is commonly made between those who are without shelter, or 'sleeping rough,' and those who are homeless but sheltered, for example in a hostel, charity, or on a friend's couch. Neither of those categories fit a third group we regard as homeless because their nominal home does not provide safety, security, and support. There are people who are involuntarily constrained to live and be abused in their 'family home,' as their only alternative is living in circumstances of poverty with inadequate shelter or no shelter.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE: A CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Our challenge in writing this essay is to organize a brief but comprehensive summary of what we know or believe are relationships between abuse and homelessness at different stages of life. Heise, Pitanguy, and Germain's well-known typology of health burdens of abuse across the life cycle (1994, 5) suggests a life-cycle table format. Our thumbnail sketch of risk factors, causes, and consequences shows that there is much overlap between abuse and homelessness. (See chart on page 10.)

There are no numbers or

percentages associated with the life-cycle stages, because sampling difficulties, definitional issues, and other methodological problems make demographic estimates of the homeless population quite unreliable. But many adults perceive an association between youth and homelessness, perhaps because of the visibility of 'street youth.' A generation ago, when homelessness was much less common, it was associated with a 'skid road' population of unemployable, alcoholic men of middle age but appearing older. No doubt some of them had been abused as children. Unattached adult males do not appear in our survey because a man is usually the economically dominant partner, and when there is a separation because of family violence, usually the woman has to leave.

## ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

### *Childhood*

Obviously, infants and young children do not choose to leave or stay in abusive homes; rather parents, usually mothers, make those decisions and stay with their children. But there are risks and consequences at all ages, even prenatal, of staying or of leaving. A mother who leaves with an elementary- or younger-age child runs risks of poverty and homelessness for herself and her child. Single parents are disadvantaged in the housing market, meaning they pay

<b>Life Stage</b>	<b>Selected Risk Factors for Abuse and Homelessness</b>	<b>Common Consequences of Leaving Home</b>	<b>Common Consequences of Staying with Abuser</b>
Prenatal through infancy	Coerced pregnancy. Abuse of mother during pregnancy e.g., rape, physical, emotional abuse of mother. Alcohol, drug use, smoking by mother.	Poverty, inadequate medical care, nutrition, and shelter. Abuse by strangers. Poor psychological support and development.	Physical and mental development issues. Poverty and violence when the child is grown are potential consequences.
Childhood	Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and neglect. Abuse of a parent by his or her partner, witnessed (heard) by the child.	Same as in infancy, plus impaired schooling and social development due to frequent moves. High risk of poverty when adult.	Physical and mental health issues, inability to form healthy relationships. High risks of poverty and of becoming an abuser when adult.
Youth	Physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, witnessing abuse. Dating and courtship violence.	Poverty, unwanted pregnancy, prostitution, drugs, no schooling, no health care, sex harassment at work, low income. High risk of poverty when adult.	Physical and mental health, inability to form healthy relationships. High risks of poverty and of becoming an abuser when adult.
Mothers with dependent children	Physical, emotional, sexual, psychological abuse.	Poverty, inadequacy of medical care, nutrition, shelter. Weak psychological support, poor self-image. Single-parent issues.	Physical injury, mental health issues. Poor self-image. Higher risk of alcohol or drug abuse. More risk of murder, in particular for women.
Middle Age	As for younger adults, plus added risks for those economically dependent on abuser.	As for younger adults, plus even greater risk of poverty.	Physical, mental, self-image and substance abuse issues may be cumulative.
Old Age	As for younger and middle aged adults, plus added risk of abuse by adult children and others.	As for middle aged adults, plus added housing difficulties if not in good health.	Physical, mental, self-image and substance abuse issues may be cumulative. Abuse may end as perpetrator dies or enters long term care.

expensive rents or accept less satisfactory dwellings, often in illegal suites. In comparison to single women or men, single parents have child-care expenses, are less competitive in the job market than peers without children, and must spend more on nutrition, clothes, medications, and supplies. If on social assistance, a mother with a three-year-old child would receive 60 percent of a minimal healthy income in the Lower Mainland. (Long and Goldberg, 2002) Poverty is a documented risk factor for health, particularly for young children, because of compromises in nutrition,

medication, heat, and other environmental factors.

Problems with landlords, attempts to improve on poor accommodations or bad neighbourhoods, and increases in income are good reasons for moving. Financial reverses, needed repairs to a dwelling, or a landlord's decisions to sell or rent to a relative, can also force tenants to move. In urban, low-rent housing markets, moving generally means that children change schools and leave playmates behind. Moving frequently increases risks of children not developing good social and emotional

skills, not reaching their educational potential in school, and becoming ineligible for post-secondary education. Residential instability is a characteristic of children in poverty, even if they are never homeless. The prospects are surely even bleaker for children who are homeless. In addition to health, educational, and emotional deficits as children, consequences of homelessness and poverty may appear when the children reach adolescence or later in life.

Lack of financial resources or affordable housing forces many women

to stay with or return to abusive partners. (Browne and Bassuk, 1997) Poverty is both a cause of homelessness and a common consequence of leaving an abusive relationship. Mothers choosing to stay with their abusers often do so 'for the sake of the children.' Those children may not be exposed to poverty, but they will almost certainly witness ongoing family violence. Survey data suggest that a large proportion of adults who are abusers witnessed repeated abuse, usually of their mothers, while they were children. (Statistics Canada, 1994)

While the child poverty that is a common consequence of mothers leaving abusers is tragic, so too are the less well-documented, longer-term consequences of children living through adolescence in abusive homes.

### *Youth*

A longitudinal study of homeless young people in Melbourne and Los Angeles focused on the relationship between homelessness and family violence using a variety of survey and interview techniques. In summary, the findings were as follows:

"First, family violence is an important factor as a reason for young people leaving home. However, not all young people make the decision to leave home themselves. While some clearly express their right to live in a safe home environment, others equally clearly remain in violent family environments until forced to leave by parents or stepparents. Surprisingly, almost all violence reported related to physical assault rather than sexual violence. While this may be an accurate account, there may have been under-reporting of sexual assault by these young people because of reluctance to disclose this issue. As expected, the numbers of

young women experiencing violence far exceeded those of young men, with violence from a variety of sources, including brothers. We may have expected that this violence would have been perpetrated by males. In fact a surprisingly large number of mothers and step-mothers were violent, especially towards their daughters." (Edwards et al, 2004)

### *Adults*

The situation of mothers rearing children is a product of the dual disadvantages of being less competitive in the job market because of their child-care priorities, and solely responsible for providing the necessities of life for their children and themselves. Most adults who are in family relationships but without dependent children are presumably free to leave their relationships and find jobs and housing as single adults, until they are no longer competitive in the job market because of age. The exceptions, notably people with physical, mental, immigration-status, or English-language challenges, are not correlated with life stages.

We have shown elsewhere (Hightower, Smith, and Hightower, 2001, 2003) how economic dependence begins to limit the options of abused women starting at about 50 years of age, and how the increasing vulnerability of men and women as they become middle aged makes living without permanent shelter an increasingly implausible option.

A woman in her 50s who was raised in a middle-class family, married a successful professional or businessman, and raised their children, is probably at about the same risk of family violence as other married women. Perhaps she stayed in an abusive relationship for the sake of the children. If she did not have

significant employment experience during the 15 to 20 years that her children were young, she is probably unemployable, or only able to find employment at or near minimum wage. Her life experience has probably not given her survival skills for living homeless. She faces a choice between remaining economically secure in an abusive relationship, or accepting poverty and risk being without shelter. It is a choice between disaster and devastation. Paradoxically, her circumstances will improve when she becomes 65 years of age, and eligible for her own OAS, GIS, and SAFER. We have heard anecdotes of wives planning to walk out on abusive husbands on their sixty-fifth birthday. While waiting, they are at risk for substance abuse and psychological damage, as well as physical injury.

### *Older Age*

Apart from pension eligibility and reduced transit fares, there is little to distinguish the situations of middle-aged and elderly people in terms of homelessness and family violence. Abused older women are often women who were abused in the same way when they were younger. Older women are more likely to be widowed, and some start new relationships, some of which become abusive. Other widows enjoy the freedoms of being single. Relatives, primarily children, may also abuse widows.

Adult children who have lived away from their parents for years sometimes return to parents' homes, and sometimes the reason is that they are in trouble, usually financial, or sometimes due to alcohol or drug dependence. Sometimes the parents lose their homes, either by giving the children more than they can afford, or as a consequence of fraud and financial abuse by children.

## Without a Home: Stories

Frail and diminutive, the 91-year-old woman walked serenely across the big living room at Sistering's drop-in centre, a sweet smile on her face. "She told us that she had her first happiness at the age of 90 when her abuser finally died," Sister's director Angela Robertson told me quietly. "Until then she often had to sleep in the garage for safety's sake." (Landsburg, 2004)

In such situations there is certainly an emotional burden on the parent, and the financial abuse may be accompanied by psychological and physical abuse and result in homelessness.

### CONCLUSION

Homelessness and family violence are related in many ways. Each can be a cause of the other, and each can be a consequence of the other. They have some very similar consequences, as illustrated by the situation of a mother choosing whether to raise her child in poverty or in an abusive home, aware that poor self-esteem is common among children in poverty, and poor self-esteem and under-performing in school is common among children who witness abuse in their homes. Homelessness and family violence are interrelated. Both have equally tragic consequences when they occur, at any time of life.

But we cannot stop with these depressing conclusions. Researchers, practitioners, and activists must go on doing what they can to raise awareness, improve knowledge, practice prevention, stop violence, and rehabilitate victims. Success stories offer the courage to continue. Here is the way one woman phrased her message of encouragement:

"I was married 50 years until I divorced him five years ago. I had never lived alone. He was a rigid, controlling man. It is good being on my own.

Sometimes I feel so guilty for being so happy as I am now." (Hightower, Smith, and Hightower, 2001: 33)

*Jill Hightower, MA, retired as the Executive Director of the BC Institute Against Family Violence in 1998, and continues to serve on the Institute's board of directors. Jill has published and presented her research at international, national, and regional conferences and community forums, and was recognized with a Senior Service Award for 2003 by the SFU Gerontology Research Centre. She also serves as a public member of the Inquiry Committee of the BC College of Psychologists.*

*Before retirement, Dr. Henry Hightower practiced and taught community, social, and regional planning, including 22 years at UBC. He studied sociology at the London School of Economics and planning at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He serves on the boards of the BC Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors and the BC Foundation to Support Community Response to Adult Abuse and Neglect.*

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# Running for their Lives

## *The Impact of Family Violence on Youth Homelessness*

BY ANNA McCORMICK

Due to the transient, often hidden, and ill-defined nature of the population of homeless and runaway youth (Kidd, 2003), it is extremely difficult to estimate exact numbers. However, research has estimated that between 50,000 and 200,000 Canadian youth have no fixed address and live on the streets. (Webber, 1991; Ayerst, 1999) The estimated number of street youth living in large urban centres such as Toronto is thought to be between 10,000 and 20,000 annually. (Kidd 2003) More young people run away from home every year in British Columbia than in any other Canadian province. In 2002, over 15,000 BC adolescents (two-thirds of whom were girls) were reported missing to the RCMP. 'Street kids' have become the fastest-growing segment of the Canadian homeless population. (Ayerst, 1999)

### NOT REBELS WITHOUT CAUSE

Historically, running away was considered an expression of a young person's independence, or rebellion. More recent research acknowledges that many youth are running from dysfunctional and abusive families, rather than running toward anything. (Whitbeck and Hoyt, 1999) In recent years, there has been an increase in the numbers of young people leaving home due to family problems. (Fitzpatrick,

2000) 'Negative push factors' (Fitzpatrick, 2000), such as family violence, physical/sexual abuse, neglect, parental control, conflictual parent-child relationships, fear of the parent, and perceived parental indifference are the leading causes of young people's decisions to leave home. The more urgent and prominent the push factors in a young person's decision to leave home, the more problematic the transition to independence is likely to be. (Fitzpatrick, 2000)

In comparison with the general adolescent population, the vast majority of street youth experience multiple family-related problems at home. (Sherman, 1992) Homeless youth report feeling less parental love and less familial cohesion, and experiencing significantly more verbal and physical aggression and family conflict in general. (Wolfe, Toro, and McCaskill, 1999) Street youth also report a childhood lacking in affection and/or characterized by violence, (Craig and Hodson, 1998) low levels of family connectedness, (McCreary Centre Society, 2001) a higher incidence of behavioural and emotional problems and parental marital discord, and lower levels of parental care and acceptance. (Dadds, Braddock, Cuers, Elliot, and Kelly, 1993)

Reported rates of abuse in the research vary widely: different studies report rates of physical abuse between 16 and 80 percent among different samples of street youth, and rates of sexual abuse range from 5 to 77 percent.

**The vast majority of street youth experience multiple family-related problems at home.**

Almost three-quarters of all street youth in BC report abuse in the home, (McCreary Centre Society, 2001) and almost 80 percent of Canadian youth in another sample indicate that circumstances at home affected their decision to leave for the streets. (Caputo, Weiler,

and Anderson, 1997) The vast majority of youth either believe that running away is the only option to escape abusive home environments, or are pushed out by parents ("thrown away"). Approximately half of homeless youth report that a parent decided that the adolescent should leave home. (Cauce, 2000; Rothman, 1991; Powers, Eckenrode, and Jaklitsch, 1990) Youth who are pushed or thrown out of their homes experience a particular type of neglect. (Wolfe, Toro, and McCaskill, 1999; Powers and Jaklitsch, 1989) Betrayal, manifested through neglect and abuse by parents and state-appointed caregivers, is said to be the most common experience among street youth. (Webber, 1991)

Family violence and abuse are often inseparable from other structural influences such as unemployment and poverty. (Fitzpatrick, 2000) Street youth describe their home situations as having been fraught with instability and unpredictability, manifested by concrete situations such as being in care, constantly moving, and living within a home environment characterized by parental substance misuse, emotional abuse, neglect, apathy, low levels of care/empathy/acceptance and support, rejection, betrayal, a lack of trust/privacy, chaos, poverty, parental unemployment, conflict, and homophobia. (McCreary Centre Society, 2002b)

## INSULT TO INJURY: GLBT STREET YOUTH

Abused street youth are more likely than abused housed youth to self-identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or transgendered (GLBT) (McCreary Centre Society, 2002); and among street youth, GLBT youth experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual abuse and neglect, compared to heterosexual street youth. (Tyler and Cauce, 2002) More specifically, male gay, bisexual, and unsure (GBU) youth report higher rates of physical abuse, while female GLBU youth report slightly higher rates of sexual abuse than heterosexual youth. (Noell and Ochs, 2001)

It is estimated that between 18 and 40 percent of Canadian homeless youth are gay or lesbian (Russell, 1998, as cited in Mayers, 2001) and an estimated 50 percent of street youth in Canada have sexual-identity issues. (Hodgson, 1996) Sexual orientation is often cited as the precipitating factor for leaving home, because some gay youth are no longer welcome within their families.



(Buchanan, 1995) Homosexual youth experience varying types of abuse at home due to their sexual identity, from feelings of isolation and alienation, to conflict and strain with parents, to physical violence and sexual abuse. By leaving home, these youth “avoid abuse and maintain the family secret, but they also face a world that is prepared to exploit them.” (Savin-Williams, 1994: 264) GLBT youth face all the same obstacles to survival on the streets as heterosexual youth, as well as the stigma of sexual minority-group membership. Although many GLBT youth are reportedly most frequently assaulted by other (heterosexual) youth, approximately half are also victims of parental physical abuse, and suffer both mental and physical health problems as a result. (Savin-Williams, 1994)

## COPING AND SUBSISTENCE STRATEGIES

Homeless adolescents who have been abused (while said to be less psychologically resilient) are more likely to associate with ‘deviant’ friends, and

engage in criminal subsistence strategies on the streets (eg, selling drugs, prostitution, theft, robbery) to further their physical survival. (Whitbeck and Simons, 1990; McCreary Centre Society, 2002; Baron, 2003; Whitbeck, Hoyt, and Ackley, 1997b)

### *Fighting for Survival*

Despite the abuse, and the existence of provincial authorities to address it, it is unrealistic to expect all abused adolescents to report the abuse due to fears of retaliation, re-victimization, being ignored, or being disbelieved; for many youth, running is equated with survival. (Kariel, 1993) However, living on the streets poses another set of challenges, which makes it difficult for a young person to avoid experiencing and engaging in violence, victimization, substance abuse, and other high risk or deviant behaviours in order to cope and survive.

Life-course theory helps explain the propensity to engage in high-risk subsistence strategies and, via “cumulative continuity,” the necessity of doing so. (Caspi, Bem, and Elder, 1987,

as cited in Tyler, Hoyt, Whitbeck, and Cauce, 2001; as cited also in Whitbeck, Hoyt, Yoder, Cauce, and Paradise, 2001) Particularly relevant for males, coercive, abusive, exploitive, and aggressive behaviours which they have learned at home or on the streets, become coping and interaction styles, which can create conflict and ignite violence. This can lead to further rejection by pro-social peer groups, forcing youth to form ties with 'deviant' peer groups and become involved in risky or deviant behaviours and survival techniques or subsistence lifestyles. (Baron, 2003) Further entrenchment in 'deviant' lifestyles, increased substance abuse, and a lack of conventional ties results in increased risk of physical and sexual victimization for the young person.

### *Selling Body and Soul*

According to one study in Toronto, 54 percent of street youth are engaged in prostitution. (Goldman, 1988, as cited in Sherman, 1992) Although running away itself has a dramatic effect on entry into prostitution in early adolescence, childhood sexual victimization nearly doubles the odds of entry into prostitution for young women. (McClanahan, McClelland, Abram, and Teplin, 1999)

"Though background specifics vary, child prostitutes tend to have experienced a deep and damaging divide between themselves and their parent(s) or substitute caregivers. Their family dynamics annihilated the child's self-respect and sowed seeds of self-hatred that would later blossom into self-

destruction. While physical abuse and neglect can precipitate the downward spiral, early sexual trauma may be the most prevalent shared experience among young hookers, especially girls. Prostitutes are twice as likely as typical Canadian adolescents to have had

**Between 18 and 40 percent of Canadian homeless youth are gay or lesbian and an estimated 50 percent have sexual-identity issues.**

prepubescent sex accompanied by force or threat of force. The violation of fragile child sexuality, if it is combined with other family tensions or emotional deficiencies—whether in the child or in the family—makes the probability of catastrophe in puberty extremely high."

(Webber, 1991: 98-99)

Although not the most often engaged-in 'deviant' subsistence activity, sexual exploitation among street youth is likely the most damaging and devastating. Sexually exploited youth also experience increased levels of violence. Due to police disinterest in filing reports from sexually exploited street youth against 'bad dates,' and the myth of protection from pimps, street youth must carry their own weapons, and often exact their own 'justice.' (Webber, 1991) As previously (and continuously) abused, sexually exploited, powerless, drug-addicted young people, these youth often face one of three kinds of premature death: 'accidental' overdose, deliberate overdose, or a homicidal customer. (Webber, 1991)

### *Using to Forget*

Substance abuse has been found to be as high as 94 percent among Canadian homeless youth. Generally, in comparison with housed youth, homeless and runaway youth exhibit much higher rates of illicit substance use of IV drugs, heroin, methamphetamines, and crack cocaine. (Sibthorpe, Drinkwater, Gardner, and Bammer, 1995; Greene and Ringwalt, 1997; Greene, Ennett, and Ringwalt, 1997) They also have more social and drug-abuse problems, (Smart and Ogborne, 1994) and use harder drugs more often. For many youth, alcohol and other drug use serves as a coping mechanism for the dysfunctional families they left, and for the harsh realities of life on the streets.

### *The Ultimate Escape*

Street youth who have experienced both physical and sexual abuse (or sexual abuse alone) are at especially high risk for suicide attempts. This "suggests that the destructive families that produce runaways and throwaways may inadvertently kill them." (Mayers 2001: 158) Abused adolescents may internalize

**The destructive families that produce runaways and throwaways may inadvertently kill them.**

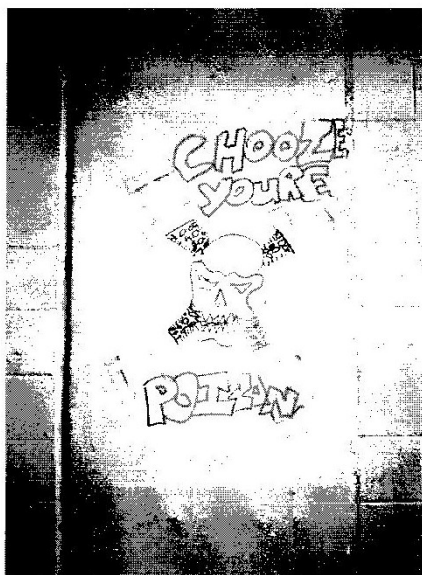
their feelings of anger toward their abusers, which may cause depression and lower self-esteem. Low self-esteem is known to increase one's risk for depression and decrease one's ability to cope with stressful

life events. The stress of emotional problems, both before leaving home, and while on the street, often leads a young person to use drugs to relieve difficult feelings and temporarily escape, and suicide may represent the ultimate form of escape. (Yoder, Hoyt, and Whitbeck, 1998)

The challenges of living on the streets and coping with negative stigma with few social support networks complicates the lives of GLBT homeless youth. In particular, male GBTU youth report being sexually victimized more often than heterosexual males since their arrival on the street. They show higher levels of depression, withdrawn behaviour, difficulty sleeping, social problems, aggression, internalizing and externalizing behaviour, and many are at higher risk of suicidal behaviour.

## CONCLUSION

The lived experiences of homeless youth are devastating. Violence and abuse, perpetrated by family at home, by others on the streets, and sometimes by themselves in order to cope and survive, perpetuates a destructive downward spiral. These youth require and merit the love, support, and care deserved by all children, and legislated in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. (1989) In BC alone, numbers of homeless youth are increasing, due to family violence and abuse. However, the percentage of the BC government budget allocated for children and families has never been lower. In April 2004, the Ministry for Children and Family Development experienced a \$63-million budget cut, which affects services such as safe houses, foster care, early-childhood development programs, and services for at-risk, high-risk, and sexually exploited youth. (*Vancouver Sun*, March 13, 2004) Without serious acknowledgement of the underlying causes of youth homelessness, and greater efforts (through funds and services) required to prevent and address them, we may sadly witness increasing numbers of our youth barely surviving



the harsh realities of life at home and on the streets. It takes a community not only to raise a child, but to protect him or her from violence.

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*For a more detailed review of the literature on the impacts of family violence on the health of street youth, please look for the upcoming BCIFV publication, The Impacts of Family Violence on the Health of Street Youth [in publication]. For more information on street youth in BC, please consult various publications of the McCreary Centre Society.*

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## Without a Home: Stories

"My mom was an alcoholic. My dad was abusive to my mom. There were no diapers, no food, no nothing in the house. The babysitter called the department of social services. I don't blame her. I don't blame my mom. I mean everyone has their addictions ...

"The guy at the group home raped me and the lady beat me with her key chain from head to toe. She'd trip me. She'd smother me with plastic bags over my mouth and nose because I wouldn't eat all my food on my plate. She made me strip in front of the kids, male and female, stark naked.

"... I ended up in a medical centre (a psychiatric hospital). In and out. In and out. I even tried taking my own life." (Neal, 2004: 5)

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# The Invisible, Visible Homelessness in a Rural BC Community

BY CAROL SEYCHUK

Homelessness has many different definitions and categories. The definitions referred to in this article are: visible, hidden, and at risk.

Visible homelessness typically includes persons who access emergency hostels and shelters and those who sleep rough in places such as parks, alleys, ravines, doorways, vehicles, and abandoned buildings. Hidden homelessness includes people who temporarily stay with their social networks, or remain in unsafe homes and situations in order to maintain shelter. Hidden homelessness can also include living in overcrowded households and unsafe buildings. Individuals at risk of homelessness can include those who are one step away from eviction, bankruptcy, or family separation. Youth who are living in homes where there is parent-child conflict, domestic violence, and physical/sexual abuse are at great risk. Poverty, substance misuse, mental illness, and being poorly prepared for independent living may also increase the risks of homelessness.

As very little research exists specific to a northern experience, qualitative and quantitative data on homelessness in rural and northern BC are not currently available. Partly in response to this, in the community of Smithers, BC a new research project is underway called, *Is There a Better Way? The Issue of Homelessness in Smithers*. A community of just over 5000

individuals, Smithers is surrounded by several outlying villages, which bring the regional population up to about 17,000. The goal of the research project is to identify contributing factors to homelessness in the Smithers area, as well as barriers to overcoming the problem of homelessness.

## LOCAL RESEARCH: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Social-service providers and advocates have recognized the structural and personal factors contributing to homelessness and at-risk homelessness in the Smithers area for several years. However, preliminary research shows that the community at large is unaware of any chronic homelessness. Stereotypical media portrayals of urban centres often present images of unkempt older men and women pushing shopping carts and sleeping in doorways, or disenfranchised youth involved in substance misuse and criminal activity. This is not the face of homelessness in the rural north and therefore perpetuates the invisibility of homelessness.

Also contributing to this invisibility is the northern climate. With winter temperatures that commonly

drop to 20 or 30 degrees below zero (Celsius), living on the street in the winter is an unlikely and potentially deadly option. However, even in the summer months 'visible homelessness' is well hidden from the community eye. Individuals seek shelter at the transition house or emergency shelter; in alleys sheds, tents, or an old abandoned mine; at the defunct railway facilities, or occasionally on park benches. Youth who are seen hanging out on Main Street all night are thought to be bored and rebellious, rather than homeless. The stereotypical portrayals of persons who are homeless can often blind us to a rural experience of homelessness and create barriers to community-based prevention and intervention strategies.

**The backlash and rumours in a small community can literally paralyze a person.**

As there are no current data on the extent of homelessness in the community, it is difficult to determine if Smithers is in line with national reports of a disturbing increase in homelessness. But several structural factors—the recent downturn in the resource-based economy, increased unemployment, cuts to social assistance, lack of affordable housing, bank foreclosures, and significant migration of the population base as noted in the closure of a local school and decline in school



enrollment—suggest that the hidden and at-risk populations have grown. Moreover, the local transition house has reported an increase in new intakes attributed to conflicts arising from what women describe as situational pressure on the family, such as changes to the economy, and unemployment for themselves or their partners.

Who are the homeless in our community? What barriers specific to the rural experience do they face? How much of rural homelessness is attributable to family violence? The best information we have comes from local preliminary research, frontline service providers, and the experiences of some individuals.

### **WOMEN: THE LARGEST SHARE OF OUR VISIBLY HOMELESS**

One-hundred-and-seventy-six women and 125 children received shelter services at the local transition house in

the last year. (Ministry Information Service, 2004) Canadian studies have estimated that women comprise 30 percent of the national average of homeless persons (Begin et al, 1999); women make up by far the greatest number of documented 'visibly homeless' in Smithers community. Women's homelessness is associated with poverty, domestic conflict, violence, substance misuse, mental and physical health problems, and the lack of affordable 'safe housing' and/or supportive housing programs.

With the downturn in the local and regional economy, high unemployment rates, cuts to social assistance, and declining child-care support, access to safe and affordable housing is an issue for women and their dependent children. This is particularly true as it pertains to women living in households where there is violence and abuse. Women fleeing abuse and violence seek shelter to keep themselves and their children safe. While the transition house

offers security and shelter, it is a temporary measure. If a woman chooses to leave her relationship she may be faced with a standard of living far below that to which she and her children have been accustomed, pressure to return to the abusive relationship, or homelessness.

A woman's ability to support herself in a small resource-based community is greatly affected by marital breakdowns and women are more often financially affected than men. "While men's income increases slightly, women's household income after divorce drops over 40 percent and the poverty rate increases almost threefold ..." (Novac, Brown, and Bourbonnais, 1996) Single-parent families headed by women become particularly vulnerable when back-up resources such as extended family and friends are exhausted. According to the 2001 census, women with an average of 2.8 children headed 260 of the 285 single-parent families reported for the Smithers area. Women made up 47 percent of the workforce

and had average earnings that were 46.45 percent less than their male counterparts. (Statistics Canada, 2001)

Financial problems are compounded by the difficulty of maintaining anonymity in a small community. Even when the shelter provides confidential support, word travels fast. Given limited resources, it is relatively easy to assume when a woman is staying at the shelter. Yet staying with family or friends is rarely an option: it can put family members themselves at risk and is also only a temporary measure.

The backlash and rumours in a small community can literally paralyze a person. Pressure from the abusive partner, family, and friends, even when it is well meaning, is difficult to avoid. Women have reported that, when they go against their social system, even for reasons of fear, the resulting guilt and isolation can leave them with no other option but to return. They also express that if they had somewhere to go that was decent, it would be far easier for them to make the decision to stay away from the abuse, or make other choices. "If I could just prove that I could do it, that I could make it on my own, it would be so much easier on me and the kids." (anonymous shelter resident)

Women do not consider the idea of moving away lightly when 'away' can be so incredibly far: the closest community to Smithers is a 60-minute drive in good driving conditions, while a larger center with more access to resources is a minimum 4.5 hours away. The costs of relocation are often very high, and the further the relocation, the higher the costs become. Moving may mean leaving lifetime supports, generational homes, and sometimes culture.

As well, women experience enormous pressure to ensure that their children have access to their fathers.

When a woman leaves, she is often held responsible for ensuring that visitation will be possible, as she is the 'one who left.' This could mean the expense of travel, or returning to the community, which may be a significant safety risk. Advocates report that the courts are ordering that one party be denied the privilege of moving away, or at least that the address of the one who has moved be made public. This further impinges on a woman's ability to relocate and maintain anonymity in order to keep herself and her children safe.

## YOUTH

Young people on their own in rural communities often have difficulty renting. Rural youth express frustration and feelings that they are being discriminated against because they are unable to rent when they are on social assistance, or because they have no references. A youth residing at the shelter stated, "It's a small town. Once you have blown it with one place, everybody knows and won't rent to you."

Moreover, like many rural communities, Smithers has limited shelter services available, and even fewer available to youth. There is one transition house for women and their children, which also provides two respite beds for girls and/or young women in the care of the Ministry for Children and Family Development, and there are four beds available through an emergency shelter service at a local motel.

This lack of shelter contributes to the invisibility of homelessness among rural youth by driving them out of the community. Youth have reported to local researchers that at-risk and visibly homeless youth often leave the community to relocate to larger urban centres in search of a supportive street

culture, shelter services, and the potential for more opportunities like employment and alternative education. The migration of youth to urban centres is an important factor in the inability to collect data about youth and homelessness in Smithers, and presumably in other rural communities. The role of family violence in youth homelessness in Smithers will be addressed by the current study; however, there is no reason to believe that it is any less a factor here than in other areas, rural or urban. (For more on youth homelessness, please see Anna McCormick's article on page 13 of this issue.)

## FIRST NATIONS

The Northwest is rich with First Nations culture and experience. However, what little national data do exist suggest that Aboriginal persons are over-represented in the homeless population. Studies vary widely in their estimates, but some report that Aboriginal women may comprise up to 25 percent of the homeless population. When First Nations persons leave home, they leave behind a community network of extended family supports and cultural traditions, which increases their vulnerability. At the same time, racism and discrimination are barriers to employment, and therefore the risk of poverty is also increased. The lack of information on Aboriginal homelessness in urban or rural populations does not help us understand the causes, but it highlights a desperate need for more and better information. (For more on Aboriginal homelessness, please see Charlotte Mearns' article on page 22 of this issue.) The Smithers study will take one small step toward filling this gap by asking questions specific to the Aboriginal population.

## CONCLUSION

As community members, we have a responsibility to acknowledge the experience of all of our citizens and incorporate pro-active policies and strategies on homelessness into our community planning. Being a small, rural community we have social and familial networks that span generations, so our capacity for supporting one another has the potential to be great. I, for one, feel more aware of the complexities associated with rural homelessness as a result of my participation on the Homelessness in Smithers research committee and I look forward to assisting with the education of the community at large once the project is completed.

*Carol Seychuk is the Executive Director of the Northern Society for Domestic Peace and a board member with the BC Institute Against Family Violence.*

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*Census: Collective Dwellings*.

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## Without a Home: Thoughts

Homelessness, for many women, is an initial solution to unsafe housing and homes. These women leave their homes because of physical and/or sexual violence and exploitation. They are homeless in both the short-term and long-term as a result of either abuse in their homes of origin or abuse in intimate relationships.... Men who are homeless might well want to return to homes (where they are often no longer welcome) while women often have no desire to return to their homes of origins. Where men seek shelter, women seek a secure and safe place to make a home.... (Neal, 2004: 29)

Numerous studies tell us that to successfully deal with homelessness there must be adequate housing including social housing for poor people. There must also be a multiplicity of services including child welfare, education, social assistance, financial services, employment, criminal justice, health and shelter services to work together in addressing the problem of homeless people. (Neal, 2004: 34)

Homelessness is "a state in which people have no access to safe and secure shelter of a standard that does not damage their health, threaten their personal safety, or further marginalize them through failing to provide either cooking facilities or facilities that permit adequate personal hygiene." (Neil and Fopp, 1994, as quoted in Chung et al, 2000: 15)

The concept of homelessness still conjures up images of individuals who have nowhere to stay at night, no money, sleeping on the streets, and no material possessions. Rarely is homelessness associated with the loss of feeling of social and familial belonging, self-worth, identity, and control over one's life. (Chung et al, 2000: 16)

Senior women may be forced to live in marginal situations after being financially victimized by adult children, or partners in former relationship. The spousal violence and abuse suffered by young women with children can and often does continue in later life resulting in a situation of poverty and homelessness for older women. (Hightower et al, 2003: 40)

Statistics about low incomes or poverty measures, while useful, miss an important aspect of what it means to be poor. The United Nations' definition of poverty, based on the more recent qualitative social research definition of poverty, views poverty not as a static measurable variable determined by statistic but, rather, as a process of social exclusion. "Poverty," it notes, "is more than a shortage of income. It is the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development—to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem, and the respect of others." (Townson, 2000, as quoted in Neal, 2004: 24)

# Family Violence and Homelessness

## *An Aboriginal Woman's Perspective*

BY CHARLOTTE MEARNS

*"We use information to form beliefs about what is and to form strategies about how to change what is. No problem is identified, or policy proposed, nor objective agreed upon without an information base. If the federal government is to meet its commitments, and the fate of First Nations people in Canada is to improve, the information upon which to base the policies that govern the lives of First Nations people must be improved. Yet, it is not simply more information that is needed; it is good information that is needed."*

*— First Nations Statistics: A Shift in Perspective to Community-Relevant Information*

I am a direct descendant of X'muthk'I'um (Musqueam's) First People. It is my privilege to share some words about family violence in our communities, the consequences of which, in many instances, catapult many of our people into the uncertainty of homelessness. Over the course of the past two decades, I have been entrenched in what has become the urban mosaic of my traditional territory, serving my people as I was 'put here' to do. I compose this from my perspective as an Aboriginal woman addressing Aboriginal people's issues.

The definition of homelessness adopted by the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee in the GVRD includes:

- Absolute homelessness: without shelter; living on the streets.
- At risk of becoming homeless: lacking security of tenure; due to circumstances, financial or otherwise, 'at risk' of becoming homeless.
- Relative homelessness: sleeping on couches in the homes of relatives and/or friends.

Each of these conditions of homelessness have affected many of our people, who have suffered or continue to suffer in dysfunctional homes with violent partners; or who have made the courageous decision to flee with nothing more than their wounded hearts and souls, their children, and the clothes on their backs.

From my perspective, and based on traditional teachings, family violence is a behaviour that traditionally did not exist. Violence is a reprehensible behaviour learned by our people in the confines of the Indian Residential School system, and which manifested itself in the form of physical, emotional, verbal, and spiritual abuse. Family violence is one of the primary factors contributing to our people's experience of the varying degrees of homelessness.

One of the greatest challenges of a statement like this is attempting to provide documentation or statistical information to support it. There is a critical shortage of research that demonstrates the direct correlation between family violence and our people

seeking refuge in the homes of family and friends, or living on the streets. Collaborative, community-based approaches, supported by government, must be undertaken to understand and break the cycle of abuse.

Since the creation of the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) and the corresponding National Research Program (NRP), which dedicates resources to regional research initiatives across the country, there have been numerous research studies relevant to homelessness generally. What is glaringly missing is an examination of the direct correlation between family

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Throughout this article, the author has used gender-neutral terminology. In a visceral sense, it is 'known' within Aboriginal communities and organizations that, as in non-Aboriginal communities, men, women, youth, and children all suffer from homelessness; but that, while men's homelessness may relate to family violence experienced during childhood, the homelessness experienced by women, children, and youth is more directly and immediately a consequence of fleeing violence. However, while increasing information exists to quantify this in non-Aboriginal communities, the same is not true in Aboriginal communities. This underlines the author's primary message: that more and better information about Aboriginal homelessness, family violence, and the gendered nature of both is needed, and urgently so. (personal communication)



violence and the varying degrees of homelessness among our people.

The Government of Canada relies heavily on statistical outputs generated by Statistics Canada's *Census Survey*. These outputs estimate the size and composition of the overall Canadian population and therefore play a crucial role in federal fiscal transfers. Because of the absence of reliable research and/or statistical collections on the national Aboriginal homeless population, the Government of Canada has based its funding-allocation strategies on pure speculation. Since the inception of the

NHI in 1999, the value of available resources for the BC region has consistently fallen short, a statement I

**What is glaringly missing is an examination of the direct correlation between family violence and homelessness among our people.**

make with confidence because I have first-hand experience as an Aboriginal administrator of these funds, I have served as a technical resource to the proposal review and adjudication process, and I now administer a homelessness initiative that has insufficient resources to meet the needs of our people.

This is not to detract from the integrity of the NHI itself. Rather, it demonstrates that in the absence of an acute understanding of

the root causes of homelessness, and expanded knowledge of the actual size and composition of the Aboriginal population on the *Missing Canadians Population Lists*, the Government of Canada will continue to render 'best guesses' about what quantity of resources will be sufficient to alleviate the hardships and suffering of our homeless people.

Valiant efforts at micro-level Aboriginal homelessness research have been undertaken by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community-based organizations throughout BC with the goal of enhancing our understanding of the root causes of homelessness. These efforts should be applauded, as they have served to inform their respective boards and homelessness governance structures about where and how best to

dedicate resources. However, while these research initiatives are useful information tools for individual organizations, they have little or no effect on the development of government policy and the enhancement of resources to support our people suffering from family violence and on the brink of homelessness.

Unless these micro-level research initiatives are complemented with statistical indicators generated from within the macro-structure of Canada's primary information engine—Statistics Canada—what we are left with are literature reviews unsubstantiated with quantitative/qualitative data.

From my perspective—as an Aboriginal woman who has dedicated her adult life to helping our people when they are caught in the web of bureaucratic and/or criminal processes, or whose lives hinge on decisions to seek shelter under bridges or in alcoves to escape the abusers they thought they knew—there remains much work to be done. This work should not be underestimated. It will present arduous challenges, and will require true leadership to realize the following goals:

- Local efforts must be undertaken to bridge the communication gap between micro-level community-based research and the macro-structure of government so that research initiatives are qualitative, quantitative, and substantiated.
- Research findings and literature reviews must be comprehensive and supported by statistical information that will hold up to the rigours of the scientific principles of Statistics Canada, so that it will be considered by government in developing policies

**Without a Home: Stories**

At age 23, she [Caroline] is a non-status Indian ineligible for band assistance until her father gets his paperwork sorted out. She was kicked out of her home at age 16 by her mother. She now has two children. The first was born severely handicapped and she could not meet his needs while on social assistance. She put him in foster care so that he could be properly cared for. The second child, a two-year-old, is still with her. She is currently living in a shelter because of her inability to pay rent. (Neal, 2004: 22)

affecting family-violence prevention strategies and resulting funding allocation strategies.

- Aboriginal organizations could undertake training and capacity-development initiatives that will enhance their organizational ability to conduct meaningful research without having to squander limited and valuable resources on external consultants.
- Aboriginal organizations must enhance their capacity, through training and capacity-development initiatives, to create administrative-infrastructure tools that support the collection of client data that can be assessed, reported on, and converted to an organizational information system.
- Research initiatives should engage Elders to ensure that the integrity of centuries-old traditional and cultural observances, which connote respect for protocols of integrity, trust, fairness, balance, commitment, clarity of vision/purpose, and, most importantly, the vast cultural diversity of the Aboriginal people, is upheld.

Only then will we be able to realize the vision stated at the beginning of this article:

“If the federal government is to meet its commitments, and the fate of First Nations people in Canada is to improve, the information upon which to base the policies that govern the lives of First Nations people must be improved. Yet, it is not simply more information that is needed; it is good information that is needed.”

*Yesterday, Charlotte Mearns gathered knowledge and served her people as Senior Contracting Officer administering resources to Aboriginal organizations in BC under the Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Strategy of the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). Today, she is responsible for the management and administration of an initiative funded under the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSC), which provides supportive programming and services to Aboriginal woman and their children fleeing abusive relationships.*

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First Nations Statistics: A Shift in Perspective to Community-Relevant Information. Available online at <http://www.firststats.ca>.



# Homelessness

## *Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence*

BY SHASHI ASSANAND

Homelessness for an immigrant or refugee woman starts when she leaves her home country and moves to a new environment, which in itself is stressful. Added to this could be the culture shock she may experience if she is from a culture that is different from the dominant western culture of Canada. And it must be understood that the stresses facing immigrant and refugee women are not the same as those experienced by visible-minority women who were born or raised in Canada.

The stress of immigrant settlement and coping with culture shock can have a severe impact on a relationship, resulting in domestic violence. This does not imply that all immigrant women experience domestic violence. Domestic violence is a social problem regardless of culture, religion, educational background, socio-economic status, or ethnicity.

However, immigrant and refugee women are more vulnerable due to poverty, unemployment, underemployment, sexism, and racism, which are often compounded by their inability to speak English. In addition, in their new environment, immigrant and refugee women may find that their ability and experience in negotiating the social and legal systems are limited, and these limitations can increase their vulnerability to violence even further.

In discussing the issue of home-

lessness and domestic violence with the staff at Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society, it became evident that the women we support face endless battles when they are leaving violent relationships. Their vulnerability increases depending on their own abilities, their social network, and their responsibilities regarding their children.

Let's start with a call to 911. Even though 911 services have made many strides with interpretation services, there are still women who have difficulties, as interpretation is not available in the languages they speak. If a woman is unable to make a call, her children may have the responsibility of making the 911 call. The impact of witnessing violence can have a lasting effect on any child's life; when one adds that they must take the responsibility for making this call, that impact is magnified. Yet funding is limited, and consequently limits resources, for programming for children who witness violence.

Our experience shows that, if women overcome this hurdle and escape to transition houses, immigrant and

refugee women may be unable to take full advantage of the support offered. Their inability to speak English as well as cultural differences may pose challenges for the women and the transition houses. If women (and this applies not only to immigrant women) have sons over 14 years of age, they may not be allowed to stay in transition houses with all their children. Or if women have mental-health issues, they

may not qualify to have access to some existing transition houses.

The problems continue for women who reach the point of requiring second-stage housing. In order to be eligible for second-stage housing or BC Housing, women need income to pay rent. Even though transition houses have a

priority-placement agreement with BC Housing, the waiting period is fairly long. Moreover, when women state on their applications for BC Housing that violence is their reason for seeking housing, their applications are very strictly scrutinized in order to prevent misuse of the system.

In order to obtain income, many women must apply for income assistance. However, to be eligible for income assistance, immigrant women

**The situation for immigrant and refugee women becomes even more complicated when children are involved.**

## Without a Home: Stories

Born in Canada, Jennifer, a multi-racial child, was adopted four times. She was shifted across four countries in Europe and the Caribbean, in numerous foster homes, group homes, and juvenile centres.... "I guess I wasn't as pretty as they wanted me to be ... I was born with a physical disability." In the early 1990s, Jennifer explains how, with six children in her care, her homelessness began and continued for eight years of shelter use.

"I was pregnant, and when I got shot by my partner, I lost the baby. It was a very abusive relationship and for eight-and-a-half years I was in 27 transition houses ... with only one bag ... moving from place to place. I have to be secluded from everybody, me and my kids. We have to be in safe houses." (Neal, 2004: 10)

who were sponsored into Canada by their spouses must prove sponsorship breakdown. This requires court action. With legal-aid cutbacks, this has become extremely difficult for women, most of whom are totally inexperienced with the justice system. For a woman who is sponsored by one of her own family members, there could be added pressure from the family for her to stay in her marriage because, if she does not, that family member would be required, by the sponsorship agreement, to support her.

Sponsorship agreements, which can continue for three to ten years depending on the relationship, (three-year period for a spouse) increase women's vulnerability. These legally binding agreements require the sponsor to financially support the sponsored individual for the time stated in the agreement. This, in turn, increases the sponsored woman's dependency on her spouse. In cases of domestic violence, a violent spouse can use this as a tool to control the woman.

Refugee women's immigration issues present even more complications. For example, if a woman comes to Canada with her spouse, who is the

primary applicant, and subsequently wants to leave him because of violence, her refugee status will be affected. In order to be a refugee applicant, she will have to establish that her own life is in danger in her home country. Although there is more than one avenue for doing this, choosing the best one requires expert legal counsel, legal aid for which is no longer available, but without which she may unwittingly undermine her own application. This situation becomes even more complicated when children are involved and the woman's application for refugee status becomes bound up with issues of custody, access, and the children's own status in Canada. There are so many ways that the legal ramifications of refugee status complicate the situation for women experiencing domestic violence, and increase their vulnerability to homelessness, that it would take a separate article to describe them.

Women also tell us how they are exploited by their landlords, a situation

that may be exacerbated by language barriers or unfamiliarity with Canadian law and tenants' rights. Women with children tell us of having been evicted for things such as children making noise or if they complain to landlords about mould, or lack of heat, which could be harmful for the children. Finding housing for single women and senior women poses additional difficulties as there is very little available for them.

To top all this, there is the constant threat of children being apprehended if women remain in violent relationships. In this, women are caught in a double bind: Social workers tell them that they must leave in order to provide safe homes for their children, yet they may have nowhere to go, no income to support themselves and their children, and no means of gaining employment if they do not speak English. There is no question

**Due to cultural nuances, single immigrant women are vulnerable to being pushed into prostitution.**

that immigrant and refugee women understand that the safety of their children is paramount. However, many immigrant and refugee women are left with a choice between staying with a violent partner and risking that their children will be apprehended because of the violence, or leaving and risking that they will not be able to provide food and shelter for themselves and their children.

This is further complicated by other types of vulnerability that are unique to immigrant and refugee women. For example, if the family with whom a woman has found shelter has relatives or friends in their home country who wish to emigrate but lack

sponsorship, the woman may feel obligated to sponsor the would-be immigrant into Canada, which may involve complicated relationships, such as marriage, that she would not otherwise choose. In addition, due to cultural nuances regarding the roles of women, single immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to being pushed into prostitution in ways that are unlikely to occur and difficult to explain in the context of western culture. In these and other ways, immigrant and refugee women experiencing partner violence face homelessness—and hopelessness—in more ways than Canadian-born-and-raised women in similar situations.

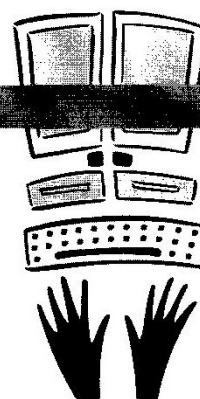
With all of these barriers to escaping violence, immigrant and refugee women can find themselves with fewer opportunities than Canadian-born-and-raised women have to escape the abuse without ending up on the street. In one heart-moving story we encountered, a woman fleeing violence spent three months sleeping in different parking lots and showering in public washrooms. Finally, she connected with our agency and was able to acquire, with much difficulty, a place she could call home.

The list of problems faced by immigrant and refugee women experiencing partner violence goes on and on. The choice these women have is between the devil and the deep sea. And all of this occurs while they are trying to find a sense of belonging in a new country and a new culture. This is a life-long process for immigrant and refugee men, women, and children in the best of circumstances. For these women, a single lifetime may not be long enough to feel that they have found a home in their new country.



In order to support immigrant and refugee women, we need to address the unique problems they face. We need to look at all the gaps that exist in the social and legal systems and coordinate existing services so that their transition from violence to violence-free life is not traumatic. Only then will we have supported them to find homes.

*Shashi Assanand, RSW, is the founding Executive Director of Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society. The society provides support, counselling, and advocacy to women and children experiencing violence. The services are provided in 24 different languages.*



## Websites on Homelessness

Regional Homelessness Plan  
for Greater Vancouver

<http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness/>

DAWN Ontario: Homeless Women Crisis

<http://dawn.thot.net/homeless-women.html>

Left in the Cold: Women, Health and  
the Demise of Social Housing Policies

<http://www.pwhce.ca/leftInTheCold.htm>

Women Need Safe, Stable, Affordable  
Housing: A study of social, private,  
and co-op housing in Winnipeg

<http://www.pwhce.ca/safeHousing.htm>

Risk of death among homeless women:  
a cohort study and review of the literature

<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/170/8/1243>

On Her Own: Young Women and  
Homelessness in Canada

[http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/0662318986/index\\_e.html](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/0662318986/index_e.html)

Family Homelessness: Causes and Solutions

<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/publications/en/rh-pr/socio/socio03-006-e.pdf>

Poverty + Human Rights Project:

Canada's Online Library of materials  
on human rights and poverty

<http://www.povertyandhumanrights.org>

National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO)

<http://www.napo-onap.ca/en/index.html>

National Homelessness Initiative (NHI)

[http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/home/index\\_e.asp](http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/home/index_e.asp)

The Homelessness Research Virtual Library

<http://www.hvl.ihpr.ubc.ca/>

United Nations Human Rights Website:

The Right to Adequate Housing

[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(symbol\)/](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/CESCR+General+comment+4.En?OpenDocument)

[CESCR+General+comment+4.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/CESCR+General+comment+4.En?OpenDocument)

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation

No room of her own: A Literature Review on Women  
and Homelessness [http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/imquaf/ho/ho\\_015.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/imquaf/ho/ho_015.cfm)

Raising the Roof

<http://www.raisingtheroof.org/>

A Report Card on Women and Poverty

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/women-poverty.pdf>

# The Consequences of Cutbacks

## *A Letter to the Attorney General of BC*

*Since the Liberal government cut funding for legal aid in 2002, the BC Institute Against Family Violence has been among those speaking out in opposition to the effects these cuts are having on women. This past September, we provided modest logistical support to West Coast LEAF and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in their preparation of a report on the impacts of these cuts on BC women and children who are fleeing violent relationships. The release of that report provided occasion for us to write a letter to the Attorney General. The text of that letter follows.*

October 12, 2004

Dear Sir:

As chair of the Board of the BC Institute Against Family Violence, I feel compelled to write to you regarding provincial government cuts to legal aid and the severe impact that these cuts have on women, especially poor women in this province.

According to a report by the Centre for Policy Alternatives and West Coast LEAF, women seek family legal aid at twice the rate of men. By contrast, 80 percent of people who access criminal legal aid are men. In 2002, the Liberal government cut legal aid by 40 percent. The majority of these cuts affected legal aid for family disputes, divorce cases, people on social assistance, and immigration law cases. According to the author of the report, Alison Brewin, the cuts led to a 58 percent decrease in referrals for lawyers in family cases since 2001, whereas criminal referrals only dropped by 2 percent.

The government has stated that divorce is a private matter between two people and that the government only has the constitutional obligation to provide legal aid in cases where someone is charged with a criminal offense and may go to jail. In your effort to maintain funding for this purpose, you have reduced access for women to legal representation for themselves and their children who are victims of family violence far more than you have reduced access for men who are accused of committing crimes. The one exception is that women who fear for their safety and the safety of their children have an eight-hour cap on their funding for legal aid while there is no cap on people (the majority of whom are men) who don't want to go to jail as a result of criminal charges.

While we do not argue that the terms that are set out are based on the right of every criminally accused person to a fair trial as set out in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the fact is that other rights are also set out in the *Charter* and these rights are ignored. I am referring to the right to life, liberty, and security of person. The harsh reality is that the use of legal-aid services is not gender neutral. Creating policy in which criminal suspects (mostly men) are being provided with legal aid in order to protect their right to liberty, while family-law litigants (mostly women) are being denied legal aid, puts the latter at greater risk of violence, including lethal violence, in the wake of separation from a violent partner.

*Continued on Page 30*

Divorce is more than just a dispute between two persons. We have laws that govern every aspect of family breakdown. Without the benefits of legal aid, women and children will be forced to stay in lethal situations because they have no way out. This has far-reaching consequences, particularly for the health and well-being of abused women and their children. The irony is that the very men who assault them (the research bears this out) will indeed have access to criminal lawyers through legal aid to ensure that they have their right to a legal defense! This is inherently biased against women, as well as costly and counterproductive health and social policy.

The United Nations Committee on CEDAW, which is responsible for monitoring compliance with the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*, has expressed concern that, in disproportionately implementing cuts in funding to services used by women, the provincial government is undermining women's rights in British Columbia and has breached international obligations as a signatory to CEDAW.

Our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* demands that the government advance the principle of gender equality and ensure the basic human rights of all of its citizens. In rejecting a gender analysis in the policy governing legal aid, the government has rejected its constitutional obligations as well as its obligation to serve all of the people of the province.

We urge you to re-consider this policy.

Respectfully,  
Frances Grunberg  
Chair of the Board of Directors,  
BC Institute Against Family Violence

## NEW PUBLICATION

# Interventions for Children Who Witness Intimate Partner Violence *A Literature Review (2004)*

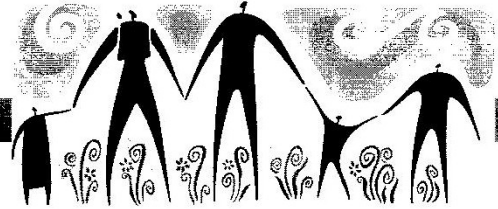
BY SHARON AGAR

The purpose of the current document is to provide an overview of the literature on this topic, with the goal of eventually developing best practice guidelines, including protocols for collaboration among service providers who work with children who have witnessed intimate partner violence. Emphasis is placed on the integration of services for children who witness violence (CWV), as this is a key aspect of service provision. The practice standards and programs that are currently in place in British Columbia, such as those developed by the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) for Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) Counsellors, are highlighted.

83 PAGES / \$10

FULL TEXT ONLINE (pdf)

[http://www.bcifv.org/pubs/Agar\\_Lit\\_Review\\_2004.pdf](http://www.bcifv.org/pubs/Agar_Lit_Review_2004.pdf)



## SOCIAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (SPARC BC)

SPARC BC works with communities to build a just and healthy society, focusing on promoting income security, community capacity, and accessibility. To these ends, SPARC provides research and consulting services to communities, organizations, and government on a fee-for-service basis; takes concrete steps to reduce hazards, create safety, and increase access for people with diverse disabilities; publishes reports and handbooks to promote public understanding and discussion of social and economic issues of concern to BC communities; and publishes SPARC BC News, a quarterly magazine providing in-depth reporting on social issues, as well as news about SPARC BC.

Research and consulting is a vital aspect of SPARC's work, and the organization seeks community partners with which to undertake research on a broad range of social issues. Examples of recently published research reports include:

- "3 Ways to Home: Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver," as part of the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness.  
<http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness/pdfs/FinalPlanUpdateReport.pdf>
- "Family Homelessness: Causes and Solutions," undertaken with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.  
<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/publications/en/rh-pr/socio/socio03-006-e.pdf>

While research reports cover many subject areas, homelessness is a continuing area of interest for SPARC BC. In addition to the reports named above, SPARC is currently:

- completing 14 case studies on ways that various organizations have addressed homelessness using a harm-reduction approach among persons who use substances.
- has applied for funding to complete a study on best practices in working with homeless persons with concurrent disorders (people with both a serious mental health condition and who use substances.)
- has applied for funding to undertake a count of homeless people in Greater Vancouver for comparison with findings from a 2002 count.

This past year, SPARC BC published two new guide books: *Access Links: Community Accessibility Contacts 2003-2004* and *Tools for Change: BC Community Indicators Resources Guide*. These important tools for community groups across BC are available for \$10 each. For a complete list of publications, visit [www.sparc.bc.ca/publications/index.html](http://www.sparc.bc.ca/publications/index.html).

In 1984, SPARC BC convinced the provincial government that designated parking for people with disabilities was a necessity. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of SPARC's parking-permit program, which now issues parking permits to people with mobility impairments across BC.

*Continued on page 32*



Recently, SPARC BC's well-received Community Development Institute (CDI) began its transformation from a biennial summit to an ongoing Community Development Education (CDE) program. Recognizing the pressures placed on BC communities by provincial cutbacks, current economic situations, and the special challenges faced by resource-based communities, SPARC designed the new CDE Program to support northern and rural communities to work together to address local issues, provide free or low-cost assistance in building local assets, and develop strong community networks to address social issues. For more information, visit [www.sparc.bc.ca/cde/index.html](http://www.sparc.bc.ca/cde/index.html).

Currently, SPARC is inviting social-planning groups throughout BC to consider joining the Community Social Planning Network of BC. An evolution of work in recent years toward developing an effective provincial network of community social-planning groups, CSPN BC offers three categories of membership: steering committee members, supporting members, and information list members. For more on the CSPN BC, visit [www.sparc.bc.ca/social\\_planning\\_network/index.html](http://www.sparc.bc.ca/social_planning_network/index.html). For more information on SPARC BC, visit [www.sparc.bc.ca](http://www.sparc.bc.ca), email [info@sparc.bc.ca](mailto:info@sparc.bc.ca), or phone 604-718-7733.

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### SOCIETY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF BC

The core function of this multi-mandated organization is to ensure that a 'child/youth best-interest lens' is applied in the development of policies that will affect the lives of young people. In pursuit of this goal, SCY does research and analysis, hosts round-table discussions and professional-education opportunities, and develops resources, briefs, and position statements on a wide range of issues affecting children and youth. Examples of issues addressed include: child-abuse prevention, children as witnesses in criminal court, child poverty, children and sport, child-friendly housing, children's play and play environments, school grounds, the effects of second-hand smoke on children's health, children as citizens, children with disabilities youth with disabilities in the criminal-justice system, children's rights education, and child welfare. The lists of past accomplishments are long.

In addition, SCY currently has two major initiatives: the Rights Awareness Program and Child and Youth Friendly Communities. RAP focuses on monitoring implementation in BC of the conditions of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. Passed by the United Nations' General Assembly in 1989, the UNCRC sets international standards for the healthy development and well being of children. Canada was a leader in developing the UNCRC, and one of its first signatories. When Canada ratified the UNCRC in 1991, it became bound by its provisions. One-hundred-and-ninety-five countries have ratified the

UNCRC—leaving only Somalia and the USA—making the UNCRC the first nearly universally ratified human-rights treaty in history. SYC's promotion of the UNCRC includes public-policy research, surveys, fora, workshops, and present-ations, and the development of education, implementation, and monitoring tools.

The concept of CYFC is based on the notion that 'it takes a village to raise a child.' During the last half-century, as world populations have become concentrated in cities, concern has grown about the effect of rapid industrialization and urbanization on the growth and development of children. Developed under the auspices of UNICEF ([www.childfriendlycities.org](http://www.childfriendlycities.org)) at the 1996 Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, this initiative has taken hold in cities around the world ([www.unesco.org/most/guic/guicmain.htm](http://www.unesco.org/most/guic/guicmain.htm).) In Canada, CYFC is at work in Ottawa ([www.cayfo.ca](http://www.cayfo.ca)), Calgary ([www.childfriendly.ab.ca](http://www.childfriendly.ab.ca)), and through the work of SCY. The aims of SCY's Child and Youth Friendly Communities initiative are to:

- mobilize communities to engage in activities and projects.
- provide materials and tools to facilitate activities.
- involve children and youth in creating their community's future.

For more information on SCY of BC, visit [www.scyofbc.org](http://www.scyofbc.org), email [info@scyofbc.org](mailto:info@scyofbc.org), or phone 604-433-4180.



## A NEW ERA FOR ACAM

The BC Association of Counsellors of Abusive Men (ACAM) has formally changed the association's name to the Ending Relationship Abuse Society of BC (ERA), as of July 31, 2004.

After 11 years as ACAM, we felt it was time. For one thing, although most of us make a point of distinguishing between the behaviour and the man, the name of our association did the opposite. We say that although the man has done some abusive things, he is more than the sum of this behaviour. Calling the association ACAM labeled our clients.

Secondly, in the past couple of years, with changes to the way programs are delivered to men who have been abusive, many of us who used to do this work are doing it no longer. It is important to us to stay involved, however, so we felt the name of the association should include non-practitioners.

Finally, many of us have begun working with women who are abusive. While these clients constitute a minority, we wanted to expand our purview to include those doing this work.

Accordingly, our terms of membership have also changed. Full membership is available to individuals who:

- adhere to the values and Guiding Principles of ERA
- are current, previous, or aspiring service providers to individuals who use abuse in intimate relationships
- are administrators, researchers, or students in the field of intimate-relationship violence.

Associate membership is available to those outside BC who meet the above criteria. Associate members pay the same fee as full members (\$40.00 per year, September 1 to August 31) and receive the same benefits, but do not have voting privileges and cannot serve as directors.

As ERA we continue to be committed to providing a network of concerned individuals working towards common goals of effective policy and funding for programs; support and training of counsellors; and delivery of high quality services consistent with the Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles remain our "gold standard," but they are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain responsive to, and reflective of, best practices in working in the field of intimate violence.

For further information or to become a member of ERA, visit [www.bcacam.bc.ca](http://www.bcacam.bc.ca). (We'll get that changed soon!)



## PRINT AND VIDEO RESOURCES ON HOMELESSNESS AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Adolescent Health Survey: street youth in Vancouver.** by Peters, L, Murphy, A—Vancouver: McCreary Centre Society, 1994.

Call # HE 362.70 PET 1994 v.2.

**Adolescent Health Survey: youth and AIDS in British Columbia.** by McCreary Centre Society—Burnaby, BC: McCreary Centre Society, 1994.

Call # HE 362.70 MCC 1994 v.3.

**Assessing the Violence Against Street-involved Women in the Downtown Eastside/Strathcona Community.**

by Currie, S—Vancouver: Min. of Women's Equality, 1995.

Call # VW 362.88 CUR 1995.

**Between The Cracks: homeless youth in Vancouver.**

by The McCreary Centre Society—Burnaby, BC:

The McCreary Centre Society, 2002.

Call # YO 362.74 MCC 2002.

**Children and Youth at Risk: a working bibliography.** by Caputo, T, Ryan, C, Proulx, D—Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada, 1991.

Call # YO 362.74 CAP 1991.

**Examination of the Association Between Histories of Maltreatment and Adolescent Risk Behaviours.** by Manion, I, Wilson, SK—Ottawa: Family Violence Prevention Division, Health Canada, 1995.

Call # YO 362.76 MAN 1995.

**Family Mediation: We can work it out.** by Friday Street Productions Ltd. & University of Victoria Institute for Dispute Resolution—University of Victoria: Friday Street Productions Ltd. & University of Victoria Institute for Dispute Resolution, 1991.

Call # V 362.8 1991.

**Healthy Connections: listening to BC youth (highlights from the adolescent health survey II)** by The McCreary Centre Society—Burnaby, BC: The McCreary Centre Society, 1999.

Call # YO 362.10 MCC 1999.

**Homeless Youth: an annotated bibliography.** by Veres, E, Richardson, T—Burnaby, BC: The McCreary Centre Society, 2002.

Call # YO 362.74 VER 2002.

**In the Best Interests of the Girl Child: phase 2 report.** by Berman, H, Jiwani, Y—Ottawa: Status of Women in Canada, 2002.

Call # VW 362.7 BER 2002.

**Making Choices: sex, ethnicity, and BC youth.** by The McCreary Centre Society—Burnaby, BC: The McCreary Centre Society, 2000.

Call # YO 362.70 MCC 2000.

**Multi-Problem Violent Youth: a foundation for comparative research on needs, interventions and outcomes.** by Corrado, R—Amsterdam: Oxford, 2002.

Call # YO 362.74 COR 2002.

**No Place To Call Home: a profile of street youth in British Columbia.** by The McCreary Centre Society—Burnaby, BC: The McCreary Centre Society, 2001.

Call # YO 362.75 MCC 2001.

**On the Streets: youth in Vancouver.** by McCarthy, B—Victoria, BC: Ministry of Social Services, 1995.

Call # YO 362.74 MCC 1995.

**Phase II of The Runaways and Street Youth Project: general introduction and overview.** by Caputo, T, Weiler, R., Kelly, K—Ottawa: Ministry of the Solicitor General, 1994.

Call # YO 362.70 CAP 1994 v.1.

**Phase II of The Runaways and Street Youth Project: the Ottawa case study.** by Caputo, T, Weiler, R, Kelly, K—Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada, 1994.

Call # YO 362.74 CAP 1994.

**Police Response to Youth at Risk.** by Caputo, T, Ryan, C—Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada, 1991.

Call # PO 362.74 CAP 1991.

**Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver.** by Woodward, J, Eberle, M, Kraus, D, Goldberg, M—Ottawa: Crown Publications, 2001.

Call # CO 362.74 WOO 2001.

**Seen But Not Heard.** by Friday Street Productions Co—Vancouver, BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses, 1993.

Call # V 362.78 1993.

**Street Kids.** by National Film Board of Canada—Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1985.

Call # V 362.82 1985.

## In Our Resource Centre

**Studying Runaways and Street Youth in Canada: conceptual and research design issues.** by Brannigan, A, Caputo, T—Ottawa:

Solicitor General Canada, 1993.

Call # RS 362.74 BRAN 1993.

**Violence and Maltreatment in the Histories of Children Who Died From Homicide and Suicide in British Columbia.**

by Office for Children and Youth—Vancouver:

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Call # CH 362.82 OFF 2003.

**Violence in Adolescence: injury, suicide, and criminal violence in the lives of BC youth.** by Tonkin, RS, Murphy, A—Burnaby, BC:

The McCreary Centre Society, 2002.

Call # YO 305.23 MCC 2002.

**Violence in Homes and Communities: prevention, intervention, and treatment.** by Gullotta, T, McElhane, S—Thousand Oaks, CA:

Sage Publications, 1999.

Call # FV 362.82 GUL 1999.

**What the Health!: a literacy and health resource for youth.**

by Canadian Public Health Association, National Literacy and Health Program—Ottawa: Health Canada, 2000.

Call # HE 362.7 NPC 2000.

**Young People Say: report from the youth consultation initiative.**

by National Crime Prevention Council—Ottawa: National Crime Prevention Council, 1997.

Call # YO 362.70 YCI 1997.

## FROM THE JOURNALS

### **From *Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect*, 2003, 15(1)**

- Domestic Violence and Stalking Among Older Adults: An Assessment of Risk Markers, by Jana L. Jasinski and Tracy L. Dietz
- Elder Abuse in Connecticut's Nursing Homes, by Priscilla D. Allen, Kathy Kellett, and Cynthia Gruman
- Elder Sexual Abuse Within the Family, by Holly Ramsey-Klawnsnik
- Required Elder Abuse Education for Iowa Mandatory Reporters, by Gerald J. Jogerst, Jeanette M. Daly, Jeffrey D. Dawson, Mararet F. Brinig, Gretchen A. Schmuck
- Elder Abuse and Neglect Among Rural and Urban Women, Keren Patricia Dimah and Agber Dimah

### **From *Journal of Family Violence*, August 2004, 19(4)**

- Changes in Intimate Partner Violence During Pregnancy, Sandra L. Martin, April Harris-Britt, Yun Li, Kathryn E. Moracco, Lawrence L. Kupper, and Jacquelyn C. Campbell
- "He Killed My Mommy!" Murder or Attempted Murder of a Child's Mother, by Linda A. Lewandowski, Judith McFarlane, Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Faye Gary, and Cathleen Bareski
- Exploring the Stressors of Low-Income Women with Abusive Partners: Understanding Their Needs and Developing Effective Community Responses, by Kimberly K. Eby
- Developmental Pathways in Youth Sexual Aggression and Delinquency: Risk Factors and Mediators, by John A. Hunter,

Aurelio Jose Figueredo, Neil M. Malamuth, and Judith V. Becker

- Pregnancy as a Stimulus for Domestic Violence, by Rebecca L. Burch and Gordon G. Gallup Jr.
- Alcohol and Violence Related Cognitive Risk Factors Associated With the Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence, by Craig A. Field, Raul Caetano, and Scott Nelson

### **From *Violence Against Women*, September 2004, 10(9)**

- Welfare Reform, Domestic Violence, and Employment: What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know? by Stephanie Riger and Susan L. Staggs
- "I Couldn't Go Anywhere": Contextualizing Violence and Drug Abuse: A Social Network Study, by Susan E. James, Janice Johnson, and Chitra Raghavan
- Battered Women's Multitude of Needs: Evidence Supporting the Need for Comprehensive Advocacy, by Nicole E. Allen, Deborah I. Bybee, and Cris M. Sullivan
- The Impact of Father-to-Mother Aggression on the Structure and Content of Adolescents' Perceptions of Themselves and Their Parents, Zeev Winstok, Zvi Eisikovits, and Orit Karnieli-Miller
- The Coverage of Rape in the Israeli Popular Press, by Alina Korn and Sivan Efrat

**From *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*,  
September 2004, 19(9)**

- A Positive Domestic Violence Screen Predicts Future Domestic Violence, by Debra Houry, Kim Feldhaus, Benjamin Peery, Jean Abbott, Steven R. Lowenstein, Sameerah Al-Bataa-De-Montero, and Saul Levine
- The Help-Seeking Strategies of Female Violent-Crime Victims: The Direct and Conditional Effects of Race and the Victim-Offender Relationship, by Catherine Kaukinen
- Making a Case for Personal Safety: Perceptions of Vulnerability and Desire for Self-Defense Training Among Female Veterans, by Wendy S. David, Ann J. Cotton, Tracy L. Simpson, and Julie C. Weitlauf
- Assessing the Effect of Batterer Program Completion on Re-assault Using Propensity Scores, by Alison Snow Jones, Ralph B. D'Agostino Jr., Edward W. Gondolf, and Alex Heckert
- Specifying the Influence of Family and Peers on Violent Victimization: Extending Routine Activities and Lifestyles Theories, by Christopher J. Schreck and Bonnie S. Fisher
- Is Domestic Violence Relevant? An Exploratory Analysis of Couples Referred for Mediation in Family Court, by Carl L. Tishler, Suzanne Bartholomae, Bonnie L. Katz, and Laura Landry-Meyer
- Applying a Forensic Actuarial Assessment (the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide) in Nonforensic Patients, by Grant T. Harris, Marnie E. Rice, and Joseph A. Camilleri
- Noncoercive Sexual Contact with Similarly Aged Individuals: What is the Impact? by William N. Friedrich, Stephen P. Whiteside, and Nicholas J. Talley

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**NEW @ BCIFV**

**Domestic Violence and Health Care: policies and prevention**, by Reyes, C, Rudman, WJ, and Hewitt, CR (eds)—New York: The Haworth Medical Press, 2002.

**The Economic Costs and Consequences of Child Abuse in Canada**, by Bowlus, A, McKenna, TD, and Wright D—London, ON: University of Western Ontario, 2003.

**Helping Children Thrive: supporting woman abuse survivors as mothers**, by Baker, LL, and Cunningham, AJ—London, ON: Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System, London Family Court Clinic, 2004.

**Preventing Sexual Abuse of Patients: a legal guide for health care professionals**, by McPhedran, M, and Sutton, W—Markham, ON: LexisNexis Canada Inc, 2004.

**Protecting Children from Domestic Violence: strategies for community intervention**, by Jaffe, PG, Baker, LL, and Cunningham, AJ (eds)—New York: The Guilford Press, 2004.

**Removing Barriers + Building Access: a resource manual on providing culturally relevant services to lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual victims of violence**—Vancouver: The Centre, 2004.

**Responding to Domestic Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGTB) Communities: an information packet**—San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2002.

**Violence Against Women: new Canadian perspectives**, by McKenna, KMJ, and Larkin, J (eds) —Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc, 2002.

**Violence in the Lives of Black Women: battered, black and blue**, by West, CM (ed)—New York: The Haworth Press, 2002.

**Voices: women, poverty and homelessness in Canada**, by Neal, R—Ottawa: The National Anti-Poverty Organization, May 2004. [pdf available full text online]

**What's Mother Got to Do with It?: protecting children from sexual abuse**, by Krane, J—Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

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**LIST OF PERIODICALS AT BCIFV**

*Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect*  
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- A place to start.** [40 min. video with handbook] [French language also available] (1994) \$30
- Après l'agression** [Video 43 min. with Handbook] (1994) Vidéo with handbook available for the cost of shipping and handling only.
- Aboriginal suicide in British Columbia.** [full report] (1991) \$15
- Aboriginal suicide in British Columbia.** [executive summary] (1991) \$5
- Ask the question: A resource manual on elder abuse for health care personnel.** (1993) \$3
- Assessing the risk of repeated violence among men arrested for wife assault: A review of the literature.** (1993) \$6
- Assisting immigrant and refugee women abused by their sponsors: a guide for service providers.** (updated September 2003) free
- BC's violence against women in relationships policy and criminal harassment: police perspectives and use of discretion in investigations.** \$10
- Challenges in programming for wife batterers.** (1995) \$11
- Child and youth fatalities reviewed by the British Columbia Children's Commission: a family violence perspective.** (2001) \$10
- Child custody and access in the context of family violence: a review of the literature and annotated bibliography.** (2001) \$10
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- Children exposed to partner violence: an overview of key issues.** (2002) \$10
- Communities betrayed: multiple victim child sexual abuse in rural communities.** (1996) \$5
- Criminal harassment and potential for treatment: literature review and annotated bibliography.** (1994) \$10
- Current and future effects on children witnessing parental violence: an overview and annotated bibliography.** (1992) \$6
- Evaluation of three assaultive men's treatment programs: summary report.** (2001) \$10
- Guiding principles for assaultive men's treatment in correctional centres in BC.** (1995) \$8
- Identifying those at risk for physically abusing children: literature review.** (1997) \$10
- Looking back on child sexual abuse: an overview and annotated bibliography.** (1995) \$10
- Manual for the sexual violence risk - 20 (SVR - 20).** (1997) \$30
- Manual for the spousal assault risk assessment guide (SARA) 2nd edition.** (1995) \$20
- Modelling equality: support groups for survivors of woman abuse.** [reprint] (1993) \$10
- Psychological and behavioural typologies of men who assault their female partners.** (2002) \$10
- Pump up the volume.** [36 min. video] (2002) sliding scale: \$5-\$10 individuals/survivors; \$20 women's organizations, transition houses, immigrant-serving agencies; \$35 institutions, service providers, libraries
- Relationship violence and diversion: a literature review on pro-charge policies and crown discretion** (2003) \$10
- Responding to domestic violence and disaster: guidelines for women's services and disaster practitioners.** (1997) \$10
- Risk for sexual violence protocol (RSVP): structured professional guidelines for assessing risk of sexual violence.** (2003) \$55
- Safety planning with abused partners: a review and annotated bibliography** (2003) \$10
- Sentencing in the context of domestic violence: a review of the literature and analysis of disposition data.** (1999) \$10
- Setting standards and guiding principles for the assessment, treatment and management of sex offenders in British Columbia: background papers.** (1994) \$10
- Standards and guidelines for the assessment, treatment and management of sex offenders in British Columbia.** (1996) \$10
- The person within: preventing abuse of children and young people with disabilities.** [28 min. video with handbook] (1999) \$50 [handbook only \$7]
- Through the looking glass: discipline vs. abuse - a multicultural perspective.** (1997) \$8
- Under scrutiny: corporal punishment and Section 43 of the Canadian Criminal Code.** (2001) \$10
- Violence against women in relationships: intervention programs for men.** [includes guiding principles]. (1992) \$10 [guiding principles only \$5]
- Waking up to violence.** [58 min. video] (2000) \$149
- Wasted lives: the tragedy of homicide in the family.** [full report] (1994) \$28
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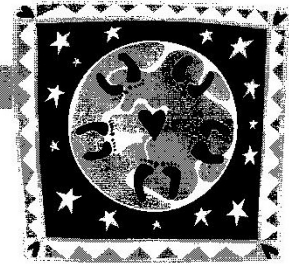
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### FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT INSTITUTE (FVSAI)

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