

**YELLOWKNIFE INTERAGENCY
FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE PROTOCOL**

May 2008

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

Acknowledgements

The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol pilot project was made possible by the dedication and commitment of the Protocol Development Steering Committee, which includes representatives from the Government of the NWT, the Government of Canada, and territorial and Yellowknife voluntary groups. Of particular note is the outstanding commitment and efforts of the NWT Seniors' Society and NWT Health and Social Services that co-sponsored this project. The pilot project benefited from the high level of priority given to it by the eight 'first response' agencies that are the signatories of the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol.

Justice Canada and GNWT Health and Social Services funded the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol pilot project. The project was also supported by the time and resources generously contributed by each participating agency. Participating groups including the eight agencies that are part of the Protocol are:

YWCA Alison McAteer House*	Canada/NWT Service Centre,
Centre for Northern Families*	Income Security Programs*
YWCA of Yellowknife	GNWT Health and Social Services
Public Prosecution Service of Canada,	Yellowknife Victim Services*
NWT Regional Office*	GNWT Justice
GNWT Education, Culture and Employment	NWT Seniors' Society
Yellowknife RCMP Detachment*	RCMP 'G' Division
Stanton Territorial Health Authority*	Yellowknife Housing Authority
Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority*	

Bob Stephen and Lois Little of Lutra Associates Ltd., with contributions from MaryAnne Duchesne, facilitated the protocol development process and drafted the Yellowknife Family Violence Interagency Protocol.

*denotes 'first response' agency and signatory to the Protocol.

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Preface

The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol (the Protocol) is an agreement among agencies to improve responses to adult victims of family violence. The Protocol describes how agencies will respond to adult victims of family violence and interact with each other. By following the Protocol, the agencies expect to offer a seamless and coherent response to adult victims of family violence. There is a separate Child Abuse Protocol in place.

The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol is a living document that can evolve with the circumstances of the community and the agencies that serve adult victims of family violence. For example, as agency protocols or agreements between two or more agencies are created, or legislation or policies respecting adult victims of family violence are introduced, these relationships and procedures can be reflected in the Protocol.

At this time, eight agencies are part of the Yellowknife Protocol. The eight agencies are:

- Yellowknife RCMP Detachment
- Yellowknife Victim Services
- Public Prosecution Service of Canada, NWT Regional Office
- Stanton Territorial Health Authority
- YWCA Alison McAteer House
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority
- Centre for Northern Families
- GNWT Income Security Programs.

These services and supports respond to the three stages of need typically experienced by adult victims of family violence- emergency or immediate needs, intermediate or short-term needs, and longer-term needs. It is expected that more Yellowknife agencies will ‘sign onto’ the Protocol in the future.

The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol was identified in the *Government of the NWT’s Response to the NWT Action Plan on Family Violence (2003-2008)*. The GNWT expects that the Protocol will reduce unintended organizational barriers that may diminish the effectiveness of agencies’ responses to family violence. The GNWT also expects the Yellowknife protocol pilot project to test and refine a protocol development process and produce a protocol template. The Yellowknife protocol development experience can help other NWT communities to improve their

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response and consistency of services to adult victims of family violence. A tool kit and template for interagency protocol development were developed along with this Protocol.

The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol was developed through a series of meetings and workshops involving Protocol Development Steering Committee members. It culminated with a community consultation that also involved other front-line agencies that serve adult victims of family violence. An analysis of community interagency protocols, protocol development processes and best practices in other jurisdictions supplemented the work of the Protocol Development Steering Committee. In addition, materials from in-depth interviews with ‘first response’ agencies and existing agency and interagency protocols were compiled to enhance understanding of the work done now to respond to adult victims of family violence, and to identify opportunities to build on this foundation.

As a pilot project, the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol has lessons for those who participated and those who might participate in this or another community interagency protocol in the future. First, it is important to know what your own organization does, and is willing and able to do, to respond to adult victims of family violence. Second, it should be understood that a protocol is not just about commitments made on paper. It is also about building open and healthy relationships within and between agencies. It is the people and the way they work together that give protocols meaning, and can really make a difference in the way individuals and groups work together and coordinate their responses to adult victims of family violence. Lastly, it is important for those participating on protocol committees to have the authority within their own organizations to make the commitments agreed to in the protocol, and to ensure that commitments are implemented by frontline staff.

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Glossary of Terms

Active Referral

Active referral means interagency communication about shared responses to an adult victim of family violence. (See page 7 for further detail). For a referral, agencies accurately identify the needs of the victim and match them to the appropriate agency. They know who to contact in the receiving agency for information and assurance that the response to any victim's request for help will occur quickly (i.e. 24 hours) and in an appropriate manner.

Assessment

Assessment is a method of identifying the nature and extent of violence or abuse, and identifying appropriate ways to help the victim.

Family Violence and Abuse

Family violence and abuse is a pattern of behaviour that stems from the abuse of power within intimate and dependent relationships. It can take many forms – physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse, and neglect. (For further definition of each form, see page 3). Family violence is sometimes a crime. For example, assault, sexual assault, criminal harassment, forcible confinement, uttering threats, murder, breach of court orders, theft, and fraud are crimes that will be investigated by RCMP, and prosecuted if appropriate standards are met.

Intervention

Interventions are actions taken by agencies to respond to reports or incidents of family violence, in order to assist and support adult victims of family violence.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment helps provide an indication of the victim's potential level of risk of experiencing further violence, including serious injury or death. Risk assessment considers the nature, severity, frequency and imminence of violence and is an important first step in the development and implementation of a safety plan for the victim.

SUMMARY

What is the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol?

The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol (the Protocol) is an agreement among agencies to improve responses to adult victims of family violence. The Protocol describes how agencies will respond to adult victims of family violence and interact with each other. By following the Protocol, the agencies expect to offer a seamless and coherent response to adult victims of family violence.

If adult victims of family violence know what to expect from service providers, it may increase their confidence in the community's response.

At this time, eight agencies are part of the Protocol. The eight agencies are:

- Yellowknife RCMP
- Yellowknife Victim Services
- Public Prosecution Service of Canada, NWT Regional Office
- Stanton Territorial Health Authority
- YWCA Alison McAteer House
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority
- Centre for Northern Families
- GNWT Income Security Programs.

It is the hope that more Yellowknife agencies will sign on to the Protocol in the future.

The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol is a pilot project. The pilot project was called for in the *Government of the NWT's Response to the NWT Action Plan on Family Violence (2003-2008)*. The work of developing the protocol was funded by Justice Canada. GNWT Health and Social Services and the NWT Senior's Society led the pilot project with guidance from the Protocol Development Steering Committee.

More information about the Protocol is available from the participating agencies.

What is family violence and abuse?

For the Protocol, the eight agencies agree that family violence and abuse is a pattern of behaviour that stems from the abuse of power within intimate and dependent relationships. Family violence is sometimes a crime. It can take many forms – physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse, and neglect.

Vulnerable populations may be at greater risk of family violence.

As adult victims of family violence and abuse are most often women, the feminine pronoun will be used throughout this document to refer to adult victims.

Women, children, youth and elderly people are most often the victims of family violence.

What is the Yellowknife Protocol trying to achieve?

The eight agencies that are part of the Protocol want a community that:

1. Does not tolerate violence against women or family violence in any form, and
2. Offers a seamless and coherent response to adult victims of family violence.

Even though the agencies may be constrained by their respective mandates, they are working toward this vision by:

1. Being sensitive in their responses to adult victims of family violence.
2. Working with other agencies in accountable, honest and respectful ways.
3. Building and strengthening the continuum of services for adult victims of family violence that are accessible, respectful, user friendly, coordinated, integrated, gender-specific and family oriented.
4. Recognizing that offenders are accountable for their actions.

The eight agencies that are part of the Protocol agree to work together and work differently to make a difference for adult victims of family violence.

What are the agencies' commitments?

To the extent that each agency's mandate allows, the eight agencies are committed to:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.¹

The eight agencies that are part of the Protocol made 10 commitments.

¹ The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol was developed separately from the NWT Child Abuse Protocol. Not all signatories to the Yellowknife Protocol are signatories to the earlier Child Abuse Protocol.

What differences will the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol make for adult victims of family violence?

As described here and in the Interagency Response Chart in Appendix D, adult victims of family violence in Yellowknife can expect a more seamless and coherent response when they ask for help from the agencies involved in this Protocol.

Screening and Intake

To the extent that each agency's mandate allows, intake, reception and other front-line staff will routinely screen all inquiries to identify the presence of family violence and abuse. This means they will:

- √ Listen carefully, acknowledge and validate the victim's experience.
- √ Observe and document indicators of abuse.
- √ Briefly explain that the agency is part of the Yellowknife Protocol and committed to addressing family violence.
- √ Ask one or two questions about family violence and abuse where there is suspicion of abuse.
- √ Provide information about where an adult victim of family violence can get the help they may need.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment helps provide an indication of the victim's potential risk of experiencing further violence including serious injury or death. The questions asked to understand these risks assist both the helping agency and the victim to take appropriate interventions in efforts to keep the victim safe. Yellowknife Victim Services, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, YWCA Alison McAteer House, the Centre for Northern Families and the RCMP do risk assessments. They will:

- Document information and seek the victim's consent to share it with other agencies that can help the victim in the immediate, short and long term.
- Work with the victim to develop a concrete and realistic safety plan and support plan.

Assessment

Yellowknife Victim Services, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority Family Counselling Services, YWCA Alison McAteer House, and the Centre for

Reception and other intake and front-line workers will be trained to screen clients to determine if family violence is a factor.

Risk assessment can heighten a victim's awareness of the danger she is in.

Safety plans and support plans can help keep adult victims of family violence safer.

Agencies doing assessments and risk assessments prefer to use standardized tools and information sharing processes so adult victims of family violence only have to be assessed once.

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Northern Families will assess the nature and extent of the violence and/or abuse, and identify appropriate ways to help the victim.

Personnel conducting assessments will be non-judgemental. They will inform the victim that all information is confidential.

Guidelines for Making Active, Timely Referrals

When agencies refer adult victims of family violence to another agency, they are communicating with that agency about shared responses to the victim. Referring agencies accurately identify the needs of the victim and match them to the appropriate agency. Agencies involved in referrals:

- Recognize the range of services and agencies available to respond to victims of family violence and abuse.
- Know about the policies and procedures of other agencies including any interagency protocols.
- Recognize the willingness and capacity of other agencies to respond quickly (i.e. 24 hours) and in an appropriate manner to any victim request for help.
- Know who to contact in the receiving agency for information and assurance that they can and will respond to adult victims of family violence.

The agencies involved in the Protocol will share information on the supports and services that are available to respond to adult victims of family violence. They will have contact names, current phone numbers and a summary of agency services and make sure that correct information is available on a community resources card and on the GNWT Health and Social Services family violence website link.

Intervention

Interventions by agencies respond to reports and incidents of family violence and assist and support adult victims. The agencies involved in the Protocol will be non-judgemental, understanding and compassionate in their approach to adult victims of family violence. They will offer a continuum of supports and interventions that:

- √ Help adult victims deal with a crisis.
- √ Minimize risk.
- √ Meet victims' immediate and basic needs.
- √ Help victims make critical decisions and plan for the future.
- √ Recognize that offenders are accountable for their actions.
- √ Help victims obtain ongoing support and counselling needs.
- √ Provide on-going prevention and education about family violence.

The agencies involved in the Protocol will make active referrals.

A range of supports and services will be available to provide options for adult victims' safety and well-being.

Adult victims of family violence may have emergency and short-term needs to keep safe from family violence and longer-term needs to recover from the effects of family violence.

To the extent that their mandates allow, the agencies involved in the Protocol will respond to:

- An emergency or crisis situation by focusing on the victim's safety;
- A short-term situation by helping victims secure their immediate and basic needs; and
- Long-term supports by helping victims plan for their future safety and security.

How can agencies support the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol?

Agencies support the Protocol through their active participation and by giving high priority to addressing family violence and abuse. The Protocol is also supported by agencies taking leadership; family violence training and awareness; complaint and conflict resolution processes; and clear evaluation processes.

Taking Leadership

To the extent that each agency's mandate allows, the agencies involved in the Protocol will through their actions take leadership in supporting a coherent and seamless response to adult victims of family violence and abuse. They will:

- Modify and update internal protocols and policies related to family violence.
- Expand interagency protocol discussions with the view to formalizing partnerships with other agencies.
- Arrange impartial, appropriate, and culturally relevant services for victims, including language services.
- Create a forum for ongoing interagency policy dialogue and discussion to improve responses to victims of family violence and abuse.
- Establish information sharing guidelines.
- Raise public awareness about family violence, the Protocol and its impact on the community.

Family Violence Training and Awareness

The agencies involved in the Protocol will:

- Raise awareness about the Protocol within their own and other agencies.
- Collaborate on training staff to fulfill the commitments made in the Protocol.
- Advocate for family violence training and awareness education in their workplaces and in the community.

Staff training will be a priority of agencies participating in the Protocol.

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Interagency Conflict Resolution

The agencies involved in the Protocol commit to promptly address issues that create conflict between agencies. To minimize interagency conflict, agencies will engage in a forum for ongoing policy dialogue and discussion, and developing appropriate solutions for difficult situations.

Evaluating Results and Process

The effectiveness of the Protocol will be monitored and evaluated. The Protocol Development Steering Committee will develop an evaluation framework and oversee these functions.

PART 1: THE INTERAGENCY PROTOCOL

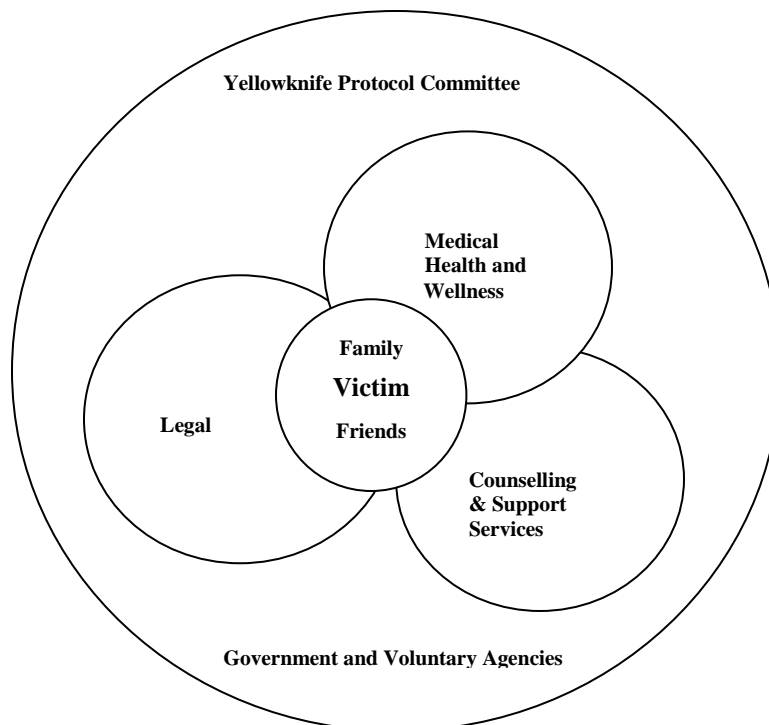
Section A: The Yellowknife Interagency Response to Adult Victims of Family Violence and Abuse

1. A Conceptual Framework

Being sensitive in their responses to adult victims of family violence is at the heart of improving responses to adult victims of family violence in Yellowknife. This approach means that the experience, capacities, needs and preferences of the victim are considered in the agency's response.²

The conceptual framework for the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol (the Protocol) is focused on the victim. It is adapted from the Region of Peel's model for responding to the violence and abuse of women.³

Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol Conceptual Framework



² The Public Prosecution Service of Canada NWT Regional Office and the RCMP are bound by nationally established policies that require that, in certain circumstances, they take action that may not be consistent with the preferences of the victim.

³ Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse. 2002. *The Region of Peel Woman Abuse Protocol Best Practice Guideline*

The circle surrounding the victim represents the personal support network of family and friends. The overlapping circles symbolize the coordinated community response and encompass the broad realms within which service agencies operate, namely health and wellness, legal or judicial, and counselling and support services. Finally, the outer circle represents the infrastructure that supports and sustains the work done in each of these realms to support and engage the victim and victim's personal network, and restore victim power and control of their safety.

The conceptual framework for the Protocol is circular to reflect the complementary, diverse and unique relationships that exist among 'first response' agencies and with other agencies. The circular framework also reflects the many points at which an adult victim of family violence might enter or exit the service system.

2. What is a Community Interagency Protocol?

A community interagency protocol is an agreement or shared understanding among certain agencies in a community. A community interagency protocol usually describes what purpose agencies hope to achieve, what agencies will do and how they will cooperate to achieve this purpose. It governs practitioners' responses to adult victims of family violence and their interactions with other practitioners. It also addresses accountability issues.

3. The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol - Vision, Goals, Commitments and Definition of Family Violence and Abuse

Vision

The vision of the Protocol is a community that does not tolerate violence against women or family violence in any form, and a community that offers a seamless and coherent response to adult victims of family violence.

Goals

Even though the agencies may be limited by their respective mandates, they are working toward this vision by:

1. Being sensitive in their responses to adult victims of family violence.
2. Working with other agencies in accountable, honest and respectful ways.

3. Building and strengthening the continuum of services for adult victims of family violence that are accessible, respectful, user friendly, coordinated, integrated, gender-specific and family oriented.
4. Recognizing that offenders are accountable for their actions.

Commitments

To the extent that each agency's mandate allows, the eight agencies are committed to:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.⁴

Definition of Family Violence and Abuse

For the purposes of the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol, the definition of family violence and abuse is consistent with the Government of the NWT's definition of family violence.

Agencies involved in this Protocol agree that family violence and abuse is a pattern of behaviour that stems from the abuse of power within intimate and dependent relationships. We agree that family violence takes many forms and most often women are the victims of adult family violence and abuse. Family violence is sometimes a crime. For example, assault, sexual assault, criminal harassment, forcible confinement, uttering threats, murder, breach of court orders, theft, and fraud are crimes that will be investigated by RCMP, and prosecuted when appropriate standards are met.

⁴ The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol was developed separately from the NWT Child Abuse Protocol. Not all signatories to the Yellowknife Protocol are signatories to the earlier Child Abuse Protocol.

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As adult victims of family violence and abuse are most often women, the feminine pronoun will be used throughout this document to refer to adult victims.

We agree that:

- **Physical abuse** is any physical act intended to control, harm, injure or inflict physical pain on another person.
- **Sexual abuse** is forcing someone to participate in unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity, or using ridicule or other tactics such as harassment to denigrate, control or limit an individual's freedoms and choices.
- **Psychological/emotional abuse** is any kind of abuse that affects the mind by systematically wearing away at self-confidence, self-worth, self-image or trust in oneself.
- **Financial abuse** is any act which involves the deceitful or immoral use of another person's money, property or physical belongings.
- **Neglect** is intentionally or unintentionally failing to care for or meet the needs of people who are dependent and cannot meet their own needs.

4. Elements of the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol

Limits on Confidentiality

All parties of the Protocol recognize that there are limitations to the confidentiality that can be granted to an individual. Whenever there is a disclosure that a child has been or may be harmed, or when an adult will harm herself or others, the individual or organization in receipt of that information has a duty to report to the appropriate authorities. Information contained in files may also be released when/if cases go to court. Every attempt will be made by individuals/organizations/agencies to inform clients of these limitations at the beginning of interventions so that they are aware of potential consequences of disclosures and are able to make informed decisions in terms of what information they choose to disclose.

Screening and Intake

Adult victims enter the system at different points or may not immediately disclose a violent or abusive incident. For these reasons, routine screening supports consistent opportunities for disclosure and entry into the system. Routine screening is intended to supplement existing screening (e.g. screening done by an emergency shelter, advocate, transitional and long term housing agencies; police, victim support workers or counsellors) and ensure that victims get appropriate services.

Agencies involved in the Protocol that routinely screen for family violence and abuse through in-person or telephone intake processes:

- RCMP 24 hour complaints and emergencies line 669-1111
- Yellowknife Victim Services 920-2978
- YWCA Alison McAteer House and Crisis Line for Abused Women 873-8257 or toll-free 1-866-223-7775
- YWCA Transitional Housing 873-5760
- Yellowknife Women's Society Centre for Northern Families 873-9131
- NWT Senior's Society 1-800-661-0878
- Stanton Territorial Hospital 669-4111 Emergency 669-4100
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority Family Counselling Services 920-6522

To the extent that each agency's mandate allows, intake, reception and other front-line staff will routinely screen all inquiries to identify the presence of family violence and abuse. In doing so, they recognize that routine screening is the critical first step for identifying family violence and abuse and triggering an appropriate and timely response. Routine screening can identify the existence of violence and abuse, and immediate safety concerns. It can also assist victims who are uncomfortable or having difficulty articulating or disclosing family violence and abuse.

Routine screening means agencies will:

- √ Listen carefully, acknowledge and validate the victim's experience.
- √ Observe and document indicators of abuse.
- √ Ask a few questions about family violence and abuse where there is suspicion of abuse (see Appendix D).
- √ Provide options about where an adult victim of family violence can get the help they may need.

Some victims may be asked about violence and abuse on more than one occasion if violence and abuse is suspected but not disclosed. If it seems helpful and appropriate, or if people voice concern or frustration with being asked these questions, agencies may briefly explain that the agency is part of the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol and community resources for addressing family violence.

To support routine screening, agencies involved in the Protocol will ensure intake workers, reception, communication specialists or others responsible for intake have current information on the other parties to this Protocol. For instance these personnel will have a family violence community resources card that is updated regularly. (Information

may be updated through the Department of Health and Social Services family violence website link http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/Features/Programs_and_Services/famviol/family_violence_resources.asp

Risk Assessment

Of particular concern is whether the victim is at risk of serious injury or death. Risk assessment helps provide an indication of the victim's potential risk of experiencing further violence including serious injury or death. To determine risk, the nature, severity, frequency and imminence of violence must be considered. Risk assessment questions help to understand what and how many risk factors apply to a victim's situation. Risk assessment may also heighten the victim's awareness of the danger of homicide.

Yellowknife Victim Services, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, YWCA Alison McAteer House, the Centre for Northern Families and the RCMP do risk assessments. They will:

- Document information and seek the victim's consent to share it with other agencies that can help the victim in the immediate, short and long term.
- Work with the victim to develop a concrete and realistic safety plan and support plan (see Appendix D).

A risk assessment tool with a high degree of predictability and focusing on the victim is preferred by the agencies involved in the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol. Currently the Danger Assessment tool is in use by YWCA Alison McAteer House (see Appendix D⁵). The tool is based on 19 questions to the victim regarding:

- An escalating trend in severity and frequency of violence endured by the victim in the past year.
- Patterns of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse (e.g. choking; beaten while pregnant; forced to have sex against will; harm or threats to children or pets; spying/stalking, property/home damage or destruction).
- Perpetrator behaviour and lifestyle (e.g. alcohol and hard drug/substance abuse, violent, controlling, jealous, suicidal, and employment status).
- The perpetrator's ownership of and/or use of firearms and weapons during abusive incidents.
- The victim's behaviour and emotional state including suggestion or attempts at suicide.

⁵ Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Ph.D., R.N. DANGER ASSESSMENT

- The victim's relationship with the perpetrator (e.g. victim offspring with another partner, discussion of/or partner separation, another intimate partner).

Agencies involved in the Protocol prefer a standardized risk assessment tool and will work toward developing one, along with an information sharing process that reduces repetitive questioning of the victim by subsequent agencies.

Assessment

Yellowknife Victim Services, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority Family Counselling Services, YWCA Alison McAteer House, and the Centre for Northern Families will assess the nature and extent of the violence and/or abuse, and identify appropriate ways to help the victim.

Personnel conducting assessments will be non-judgmental, clear, direct and sincere in their interviews with adult victims. They will inform the victim that all information is confidential within the parameters of the law (see Limits on Confidentiality p. 4). The victim and children will be interviewed separately. Interviews will be private and at a place that is safe and comfortable for the victim. However, even in an environment that is physically safe and comfortable, the amount and reliability of disclosure is dependent on the comfort and trust level of the victim. Agencies who are conducting assessments will refer clients to other agencies if there is any reason to be concerned that the individual is not comfortable disclosing information to the initial agency attempting to complete the assessment.

The language used during the interview will be easily understood by the victim, clear about the unacceptable nature of family violence, and sensitive to culture. If an interpreter is required, it is preferred that the interpreter:

- Be familiar with the dynamics of family violence;
- Be known to and comfortable to the victim; and
- Not be a family member.

If the assessment interview occurs over the phone, every effort should be made by the practitioner/service provider to ensure it is safe for the victim to talk.

Agencies involved in the Protocol prefer a standardized assessment tool and will develop one along with an information sharing process that reduces repetitive questioning of the victim by subsequent agencies.

Guidelines For Making Active, Timely Referrals

The parties of the Protocol will make active and timely referrals. Providing the adult victim of family violence and abuse with telephone numbers and contact names of other agencies is not an active referral. An active referral means communication with another agency about shared responses to an adult victim of family violence. Trust in the willingness and the capacity of the practitioner/service provider or agency to immediately respond to the victim⁶ underlies the shared response. The parties of the Protocol are committed to developing an accessible, integrated service and support network and current details on all the facets of the network in order to facilitate active and timely referrals.

Agencies involved in active referrals:

- Recognize the range of services and agencies available to respond to victims of family violence and abuse.
- Know about the policies and procedures of other agencies including any interagency protocols.
- Recognize the willingness and capacity of other agencies to respond quickly (i.e. 24 hours) and in an appropriate manner to any victim request for help.
- Know who to contact in the receiving agency for information and assurance that they can and will respond to adult victims of family violence.

The referring agency will:

- Identify family violence and abuse.
- Assist in making contact and confirming an appointment with an agency that can quickly, within 24 hours, and appropriately meet the needs of the victim.
- Seek victim consent for specific information that can be shared with the receiving agency.
- Provide the victim with a referral slip (see Appendix D) indicating contact name, directions to the receiving agency, and appointment date and time.

When receiving a referral, the receiving agency will:

- Make every attempt to respond quickly.
- Reassure the victim that they can be seen quickly, and attempt to book an appointment within 24 hours.

⁶Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse. 2002. *Peel Region Woman Abuse Service Response Protocol*

- Seek victim consent for specific information that can be obtained from the referring agency. Whenever possible, the receiving agency will avoid asking the victim to repeat information or her story.⁷
- Explain the services available and when they will be available.
- Assure the victim that several appointments may be necessary and may involve other services including group support.

The agencies involved in the Protocol will share information on the supports and services that are available to respond to adult victims of family violence. They will have contact names, current phone numbers and a summary of agency services and make sure that correct information is available on a community resources card and on the GNWT Health and Social Services family violence website link.

When the engagement of multiple agencies is expected the referring agency will take responsibility for:

- Consulting with the victim on whom they have already discussed their issues with, and what agencies have previously served and managed their case.
- Timely consultation between involved parties of the Protocol with the victim, to determine who will coordinate and manage victim support.

Intervention

Interventions by agencies respond to reports and incidents of family violence and assist and support adult victims. The agencies involved in the Protocol will be non-judgemental, understanding and compassionate in their approach to adult victims of family violence. They will offer a continuum of supports and interventions that:

- Help adult victims deal with a crisis.
- Minimize risk.
- Help adult victims take control, make critical decisions and plan for the future.
- Meet victims' immediate and basic needs.
- Recognize that offenders are accountable for their actions.
- Help victims obtain ongoing support and counselling needs.
- Provide on-going prevention and education about family violence.

To the extent that their mandates allow, the agencies involved in the Protocol will respond to:

⁷ The ability of some agencies to share information, even with the consent of the victim, may be limited by legislation (such as the Privacy Act which applies to all federal agencies) and by the agency's mandate.

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- An emergency or crisis situation by focusing on victim safety;
- A short-term situation by helping victims secure their immediate and basic needs; and
- Long-term supports by helping victims plan for their future safety and security.

Summary of Intervention Support for Yellowknife Victims of Family Violence

	Immediate Health and Safety	Intermediate Supports	Longer-Term Supports
Yellowknife Victim Services	√	√	
RCMP	√		
Stanton Territorial Health Authority	√		√
YWCA Alison McAteer House	√	√	√
Centre for Northern Families	√	√	√
Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority	√	√	√
Income Security Programs		√	√
PPSC - NWT	√	√	

Source: Yellowknife Community Protocol Planning Workshop, December 2005

The main paths of interventions are illustrated in the Yellowknife Interagency Response Chart (see Appendix D).

Intervention may include:⁸

- Listening to and validating the victim's experience.
- Emotionally supporting the victim's disclosure and their strength in addressing family violence.
- Educating about the dynamics of abuse, for example by stressing that the victim is not responsible for the perpetrator's behaviour and is not alone.
- Exploring past experiences of violence and abuse.
- Providing information (e.g. legal rights and options; financial options; shelter availability).

⁸ Adapted from Violence Prevention Council (Durham Region). *Creating a Community Response to Abused Women and Their Families The Durham Region Experience*

- Encouraging the victim to take control (e.g. encouraging the victim to make choices, take responsibility for creating and modifying plans for personal safety, deal with medical/physical needs, live abuse free and safe from harm, and develop a support network).
- Accepting the victim's choice to continue in the abusive relationship and dealing with mixed feelings about staying with or leaving the relationship.
- Strategies to help the victim who wants to leave an abusive relationship (e.g. safety plan, what to take, housing options, child custody, emotional support network, financial and legal support).
- Encouraging the involvement of the police if a crime is suspected.
- Using courts to intervene for public and victim safety including support for participating in court processes.

The agencies involved in the Protocol recognize that group and individual support and counselling offer important intervention opportunities for helping a victim gain support, share experiences and explore and challenge existing beliefs and ideas that support family violence. Interventions will be non-threatening, non-controlling, non-judgemental, and safe. It is further recognized that in family violence situations marital therapy and mediation are inappropriate and may place the victim at risk. Where possible, children will be kept together with the non-offending parent and family. A mutually agreed upon party will coordinate interventions and ensure monitoring and evaluation.

Section B: Supporting An Interagency Response

The Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol (the Protocol) is supported by agency and inter-agency policies and memorandums of understanding between agencies. These are described in Part 2 of this document. The Protocol is also supported by: agencies taking leadership; family violence training and awareness; complaint and conflict resolution processes; and clear evaluation processes.

1. Taking Leadership

To the extent that each agency's mandate allows, the agencies involved in the Protocol will through their actions take leadership in supporting a coherent and seamless response to adult victims of family violence and abuse. They will:

- Modify and update internal protocols and policies related to family violence.
- Expand interagency protocol discussions with the view to formalizing partnerships with other agencies similar to those formally linking Yellowknife Victim Services and the RCMP, and Yellowknife Victim Services and the PPSC - NWT.
- Arrange impartial, appropriate, and culturally relevant services for victims, including language services
- Create a forum for ongoing interagency policy dialogue and discussion to improve responses to victims of family violence and abuse. Case studies would be presented anonymously to protect the identity of victims and their families.
- Establish information sharing guidelines.
- Raise public awareness about family violence, the Protocol and its impact on the community (e.g. communicating publicly annual protocol evaluation results and actions planned).

2. Family Violence Training and Awareness

The agencies involved in the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol will:

- Raise awareness about the Protocol within their own and other agencies.
- Collaborate on training staff to fulfill the commitments made in the Protocol.
- Advocate for family violence training and awareness education in their workplaces and in the community.

3. Interagency Conflict Resolution

There is potential for conflict and problems between and among practitioners/service providers. Agencies involved in the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol commit to promptly address issues that create conflict between agencies. Inter-agency problems may be addressed in the following ways:

- Agency personnel will contact each other directly regarding the problem to identify a solution.
- If agency personnel cannot satisfactorily resolve the issue, they will advise their respective supervisors, or others as designated by the agency's policy, who will attempt to resolve the matter.
- If it is a Protocol related issue, it will be brought by the agency's representative to a forum of agencies involved in the Protocol for ongoing policy dialogue and developing appropriate solutions for difficult issues.

4. Evaluating Results and Process

The effectiveness of the Protocol will be monitored and evaluated. The Protocol Development Steering Committee will develop an evaluation framework and oversee these functions. Agencies involved in the Protocol will review data collection and reporting with a view to standardizing indicators and reporting data to the community.

The Protocol will be evaluated from the standpoint of building and strengthening the continuum of services for adult victims of family violence, by:

- Tracking and collecting data to determine if practices, guidelines and goals are consistently applied.
- Conducting research to determine effectiveness of the Protocol.
- Incorporating race and culture into evaluation.

PART 2: AGENCY RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

A. Yellowknife Detachment of the RCMP

Commitments

To the extent that its mandate allows the Yellowknife Detachment of the RCMP commits to the principles of the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.

The Yellowknife Detachment further commits that:

- Family violence investigations will continue to be a top priority for Detachment investigators.
- Members will receive ongoing family violence training. Training opportunities will be extended to other parties to the Protocol in order to share information and strengthen relationships.
- Members recognize and respect the different roles each agency plays in preventing and responding to family violence.
- Members will continue and where possible, increase partner agency referrals in a timely manner.
- The Sergeant in charge of Operations will address any concerns of adult victims of family violence and abuse, other parties to the Protocol and/or the public concerning the Detachment's handling of family violence investigations that cannot be resolved with the investigator or his/her supervisor. Other parties to the

Protocol are encouraged to bring unresolved concerns to the attention of the Operations Sergeant in a timely manner to aid resolution.

Service Delivery

- Emergency service is provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- During the initial response and investigation, the victim and the alleged offender will be separated to increase the safety of the victim and the police officers.
- An agreed upon supplementary screening tool will be developed and used to screen all complaints of family violence and abuse.
- Allegations of an offence will be rigorously investigated to determine if there are reasonable grounds to lay charges. Criminal charges are one of the most effective means of deterring further violence.
- Victims will be advised that police will arrest the alleged offender and lay charges where reasonable grounds exist.
- The police will advise the victim that neither the police nor the victim can withdraw criminal charges.
- All victims will be advised that victims of family violence and abuse are routinely referred to Yellowknife Victim Services for emotional and legal system support.
- The police will provide the victim additional support by providing information about the investigative process, the legal system, and other community supports including Emergency Protection Orders.

Operations

Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The RCMP can be contacted by telephone (669-1111), in person or in writing.

Procedures

Initial Response

Victim and RCMP member safety are the highest priority of police attending a family violence incident. RCMP members usually respond to family violence incidents in pairs, as the situation may escalate into violence against the RCMP. Depending on factors such as a suspect with a violent criminal record, firearms on the premises and the condition of the victim, RCMP members may request back up support from other members. RCMP members carry firearms for their own, the community's and the victim's protection against escalating violence. Weapons are used in accordance with RCMP policies that are designed to ensure the safety of the members and the victims.

Intake and Emergency Response

When Yellowknife Detachment receives a call to respond to family violence, the communication specialist requests the following information:

- Name, address and telephone number of the complainant and the address where the incident is taking place.
- Name of victim, description and whereabouts if it is someone other than the caller.
- Whether there are firearms at the scene.
- Whether there are children at the scene, their status and whereabouts
- Whereabouts (e.g. still on the premises) and description of suspect/offender.
- Available entrances and exits to residence if the suspect remains inside.
- Identification of other persons at the scene.
- Condition of the victim, injuries and need for an ambulance.

If the victim/complainant is calling from the scene of the crime and is still at risk, the RCMP communication specialist maintains telephone contact until members arrive.

While en route to the scene, the officer typically asks the specialist to run database checks on the suspect to identify police information, a criminal record or other court imposed behavioral conditions. Family violence complaints are a top priority for RCMP communications specialists who dispatch officers right away and divert them from other complaints if necessary.

Safety

RCMP members are usually dispatched in pairs to investigate the complaint. To ensure victim safety, the attending members separate the adult victim of family violence and offender, and may remove the offender from the residence.

RCMP member(s) are first responders to incidents of family violence. When the scene is secured, RCMP members assess the needs of the victim.

RCMP members recognize the emotional effects of violence on adult victims of family violence and abuse. They acknowledge that victims may be unable to make rational decisions or choices about their lives until they are suitably supported. RCMP members convey that they believe the victim, and that no one deserves to be abused. They demonstrate respect and understanding for the victim and support decisions that improve victim and child safety.

Members will tell the victim about the judicial/legal system and the availability of and accessibility to health, shelter and community supports. They will advise the victim of the availability of Yellowknife Victim Services either as an emergency call-out response or a referral to see a worker in the near future. Adult victims of family violence and abuse are advised that a written or recorded statement is an important piece of the investigation and key to preventing family violence and abuse. RCMP can lay criminal charges without a statement if other sources of evidence are available.

Assessment and Referral

RCMP members will assess adult victims of family violence and determine:

- Is emergency medical attention needed? Should the RCMP escort the victim to Stanton Territorial Hospital?
- Is emergency shelter needed? RCMP members will explain that they will contact and if needed, escort the victim and children to YWCA Alison McAteer House.
- Is an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) pursuant to the NWT Protection Against Family Violence Act appropriate for victim safety? An Emergency Protection Order can remove the offender from the residence and place conditions (e.g. non-communication orders, firearms prohibitions, and drug or alcohol prohibitions) important to the safety of the victim and children. Victims who request an Emergency Protection Order will be referred to Alison McAteer House. RCMP members and Victim Services Workers will explain to victims that they have a formal agreement to cooperate in providing information about the legal process (see Appendix B). The agreement states that the RCMP will advise victims of Victim Services and will make a referral unless the victim objects. The agreement enables the investigating officer to make the referral when people are not able to ask for help themselves.
- Are children involved? If children are present, members will explain that Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority (YHSSA) will be advised, who will assess the necessity of child protection.

Investigation, Arrest and Charges

RCMP members will discuss the investigation and potential consequences with adult victims of family violence. They will explain that if there are reasonable grounds⁹ to believe an offence has been committed and it is in the public interest, the RCMP will lay criminal charges. RCMP members will explain that the pursuit of charges against the offender is the decision and responsibility of the police.

⁹ Reasonable grounds must be based on evidence, which may include: a recording of a call to the police; a statement from the victim; statements from witnesses; observations or photographs of injuries; and/or observations of signs of struggle.

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RCMP members who respond to complaints of spousal assault will conduct a thorough investigation to collect available evidence from all sources. During the initial investigation members will check for any orders already in place such as bail conditions, undertakings or probation orders. Breaches of any such orders may be used to remove the offender from the residence and protect the victim. Members may proceed with criminal charges if there is evidence to believe that a breach of conditions exists.

When the alleged offender has been arrested he/she may be released on an undertaking with conditions when the member believes the offender will abide by the conditions (i.e. no communication with victim, stay away from her residence, and firearms, drug/alcohol prohibitions). The decision to release the offender is made on a careful assessment of the circumstances of the case and the criminal history of the offender. If the police believe it is in the public interest to attempt to detain the offender in custody, the member will consult Crown counsel who will make the final determination. If the Crown concurs, the offender will be held for a bail hearing before a Justice. The bail hearing may still result in the release of the offender to the community with conditions.

Sharing Information

Information provided by the victim, offender, other witnesses and other evidence gathered from the scene is thoroughly documented and assessed.

The RCMP will seek victim consent prior to sharing information on family violence cases with other agencies (e.g. emergency department (triage nurse), shelter intake staff and YHSSA Community Social Workers). All RCMP investigations are private and considered confidential within the parameters of the Federal Privacy Act. If charges are laid the RCMP file is released to the Crown Prosecutor. The Crown Prosecutor provides a copy of the evidence to the offender through his legal counsel.

Language

RCMP members investigating a complaint of family violence will use the services of interpreters where required. Children and other immediate family members are not appropriate for use as interpreters.

Follow-up

RCMP members may contact adult victims of family violence by telephone soon after the critical incident to check on their well being. RCMP may review the victim's safety plan and help the victim work out any details. If charges are not laid, this follow-up call may

close the investigation. If charges are laid, and a court date is set, the RCMP may contact the victim to clarify the witness statement or other such details.

Complaints

If an individual is not satisfied with RCMP services or has issues with a specific member, the individual is referred to the member's supervisor and if necessary the Sergeant in charge of Operations. If the concerns are not addressed to the individual's satisfaction he/she can file a formal public complaint against the member/RCMP by completing a form available at the RCMP Yellowknife reception desk.

Training

New RCMP members receive 24 weeks of training that includes family violence awareness at the training academy at Regina, SK. Once these members are posted to a detachment they are mentored by more experienced members who act as field coaches. Yellowknife Detachment welcomes members from across Canada who have varied levels of experience and can share best practices from other jurisdictions. RCMP members receive ongoing training in-house and through partnerships with external agencies like the PPSC - NWT and Department of Justice – GNWT.

RCMP will share in the development and training of personnel to use a standardized screening tool agreed to by other parties to the Protocol.

Linking with Other Agencies

The primary objective of collaboration between RCMP and other parties to the Protocol is to build a comprehensive, coordinated, integrated and consistent response to adult victims of family violence. This response seeks to ensure the safety of victims and hold offenders accountable.

The RCMP will routinely screen complaints for family violence and abuse. The RCMP will seek consent to share screening results when referring to other helping agencies. The victim will be informed that the RCMP routinely refer victims of family violence to:

- Yellowknife Victim Services. An agreement (Appendix B) formalizes this arrangement and ensures that where victims consent, they will receive emotional support and information about the criminal justice system. Victim Services can help the victim prepare a Victim Impact Statement, help them prepare to give evidence at court and can provide ongoing assistance throughout the court process. The agreement provides interagency guidance on information sharing, contacting Victim Services and follow-up with the victim.

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- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority (YHSSA) where child protection is an issue. YHSSA and the RCMP are guided by the Child Abuse Protocol where children may be in need of protection.

The RCMP will respond to and investigate complaints of family violence and abuse in an expeditious manner. Investigating members may be assisted by:

- Stanton Territorial Health Authority: They can document a victim's physical injuries and retrieve 'sexual assault kit' evidence/information.
- YWCA Alison McAteer House, Centre for Northern Families and Yellowknife Victim Services: They may be advocates for the victim and may aid police in evidence gathering and witness testimony.
- Public Prosecution Service of Canada, NWT Regional Office (PPSC – NWT): The police will provide a complete copy of the file/investigation where charges have been laid and if necessary, cooperate with the Crown's requests for additional investigation.

The RCMP will make referrals to and accept referrals from community agencies for support for adult victims of family violence including:

- Stanton Territorial Health Authority for medical treatment;
- YWCA Alison McAteer House for secure shelter and crisis intervention outreach, emotional support, advocacy, application for an Emergency Protection Order or other such orders, and referral to other community supports;
- The Centre for Northern Families for emergency shelter for single and/or intoxicated women, emotional support and advocacy, and referral to other community supports;
- Yellowknife Victim Services for emotional support, information, accompaniment and referral; and
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for child protection.

The RCMP will ensure:

- The victim will be advised of the offender's bail release and probation conditions by liaising closely with the courts/Crown Prosecutor.
- Information about charges and conditions relating to the release of the offender will be entered onto the CPIC database within 24 hours.
- A thorough investigation will be conducted into allegations of breach of orders/conditions and that the victim is apprised of the results.

Informal relations between the RCMP, YWCA Alison McAteer House, Centre for Northern Families, Stanton Territorial Health Authority, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority and other agencies guide the victim referral process. The RCMP refers adult victims of family violence and abuse for safe shelter, emotional and counselling support and advocacy. These referrals form the basis for formalizing interagency protocols with these agencies. In addition to the RCMP-Victim Services protocol agreement, interagency protocols or MOUs should address responsibilities of the RCMP and partnering agencies in relation to family violence, for example¹⁰:

- Procedures for communicating and exchanging information (i.e. sharing information on the status of an investigation, advising if a criminal investigation does not result in charges and/or conditions, sharing information in accordance with internal policy).
- Guidelines for liaison (i.e. participation with other agencies, updating colleagues in other agencies, advising of the agency lead on specific cases, consultation as needed, to establish that a criminal offence was committed and knowing when to involve the police).
- Guidelines for requesting police assistance (i.e. staff/adult safety risk, child protection, executing access order).
- Participation in interagency training and meetings.
- Making and receiving reports (i.e. non-emergency incidents of family violence and criminal offences of a non-emergency nature).
- Investigating reports and breaches (i.e. planning investigations with protocol partners, member awareness of the dynamics of family violence and abuse, worker safety issues).

¹⁰ Source: Government of British Columbia, Adult Guardianship. 2002. *Designated Agencies and Police Working Together. Working Document*

B. Yellowknife Victim Services

Commitments

Yellowknife Victim Services commits to:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.

Service Delivery

Victim Services will:

- Meet with adult victims of family violence, assess their immediate needs, and respond accordingly.
- Provide emotional support and crisis intervention usually immediately following a critical incident.
- Provide accompaniment and assistance in accessing medical treatment and safe shelter immediately following a critical incident.
- Provide information on the criminal justice system including general information regarding charges, court procedures, protection orders and the NWT Protection Against Family Violence Act.
- Provide court accompaniment as needed.
- Provide information on the dynamics of family violence and abuse.
- Assist victims to prepare a safety plan for herself and her family.
- Assist victims to prepare victim impact statements.
- Refer victims to other community agencies and invite more referrals from all agencies.

After the initial contact with the victim, a follow-up call is made to determine if the person requires additional support; if she is safe; review her safety plan; and discuss choices and options. As well, the client is informed whether charges were laid, court dates, and the status of the abuser (i.e. whether the accused is in custody).

Operations

Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Victim Services commits to respond to crisis calls within half an hour. There is a high demand for services, which Victim Services meets through staff and trained volunteers.

Procedures

Access/Intake/Referral

Adult victims of family violence often access support from Victim Services through:

- RCMP referrals,¹¹
- YWCA Alison McAteer House,
- The Centre for Northern Families, or
- Self-referrals

but can be referred from any agency or program.

Victim Services does not participate in investigations but may enhance an investigation by giving the victim a higher sense of security through emotional support, validation, and encouragement. Victim Services seeks RCMP cooperation, prompts the victim for evidence, supports the victim to be active in her own case and seeks to build the victim's confidence and support her control over the situation.

Victim Services informs clients of existing referral arrangements with other community support agencies. Victim Services has formal arrangements for referral through:

- A formal protocol agreement with the RCMP (piloted in April 2005) that governs each agency's roles, responsibilities and response to adult victims of family violence (see Appendix B). The agreement fosters a positive working relationship between the two agencies to address issues and concerns related to family violence.
- A memorandum of understanding with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, NWT Regional Office (Crown Witness Coordinators and Crown Prosecutors) to provide information to clients on the court system, help clients prepare victim

¹¹ RCMP are the source of 80% of all referrals usually immediately following a critical incident of family violence and abuse.

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impact statements for court sentencing hearings, share file information with permission of client, and generally coordinate court support services (court preparation and court accompaniment, for example) with the PPSC – NWT Crown Witness Coordinators. Note that in some cases, due to lack of capacity of the Crown Witness Coordinators, the above-mentioned MOU provides for the Victim Services worker to take the lead and work with the Crown Prosecutor assigned to the case in much the same manner as a Crown Witness Coordinator would. (see Appendix B).

Victim Services has informal arrangements with:

- YWCA Alison McAteer House for referral of clients for secure shelter or application for an Emergency Protection Order. A safe room can be provided at Alison McAteer House to meet with shelter clients to provide court information and give emotional support to female victims outside of regular office hours;
- The Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for referral of clients for counselling and child protection services;
- Income Security Programs for referral of clients for financial assistance; and
- NWT Seniors Society for referral of older adults who are victims of older adult abuse.

Interventions

Victim Services workers are compassionate in their response to adult victims of family violence. Workers tell the victim they are believed and that no one deserves to be harmed or abused. Workers respect victim dignity, discuss issues and concerns with victims and help them identify options. Victim Services believes adult victims of family violence have the ability to make choices when they are encouraged and supported in making their own decisions. If adult victims refuse services, victims are not pressured but reassured that they can access services when they are ready. Victims are described as persons or clients and treated with respect and dignity.

Victim Services believes there is a systemic nature to many of the issues related to family violence and abuse. That is, societal structures and traditions make people vulnerable and dependent due to power imbalances, race, class, gender, and several other social circumstances or the intersection of these categories. Lack of options and socio-economic inequalities can perpetuate family violence and abuse.

While recognizing that offenders are accountable for their actions, Victim Services workers/volunteers take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of family members affected by family violence. Victim Services provides:

- Crisis intervention support to victims, such as accompaniment to medical treatment.
- Emotional support to victims.
- Information on the dynamics of family violence and abuse, the justice system (e.g. pre-trial preparation), the status of their particular case, and notification of the offender's status at various intervals throughout the case (e.g. from charge and arrest to sentence completion);
- Coordinated access to services and victim support as they participate in the justice system.
- Assessment of risk for future incidents of abuse.
- Assistance to prepare a safety plan for self and family.
- Assistance in finding a safe place to stay, either in the victim's own home, with family or friends or in a shelter.
- Referral of other family members who are affected by the abuse.

Safety

The safety of adult victims of family violence and abuse is of paramount importance. Victim Services workers are careful not to put the victim at further risk of harm or abuse (e.g. by contacting victims in a sensitive manner, not acknowledging a client in public). Workers help victims develop safety plans that will help them manage their safety in any future critical incidents. Workers meet with adult victims of family violence in discreet public locations to ensure victim safety (e.g. Victim Services' offices, RCMP detachment, hospital, court, or shelter).

Worker safety is also important to the agency and safeguards are in place to protect the worker. Victim Services workers:

- Only attend critical incidents when the RCMP is in attendance and the abuser has been removed from the scene.
- Attend critical incidents in pairs. If RCMP are unavailable to transport a victim of family violence and abuse to the hospital or to shelter, both workers will accompany the victim to these facilities in a taxi rather than in their own vehicles.
- May care for a victim's children but only in a public place (i.e. hospital waiting room or shelter).
- Will not provide services to people who are obviously under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Arrangements are made to see the victim at a later time.
- Are encouraged to debrief with each other following a critical incident to review their response and emotional state.

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- Are not to lend victims money or property.
- Are not to give clients their home or business (in the case of volunteers) telephone numbers or addresses.

Sharing Information

The following information is gathered to start a file: date of incident, name, address, phone number, RCMP file number, investigating officer's name, gender, client type, age of victim (child, youth, adult or senior), ethnicity, referral source, offence, offender identification, victim living arrangements with offender.

Prior to crisis intervention support, clients are advised that all information is considered private and confidential, except for the limitations to confidentiality discussed earlier in this document (see p. 4). The client must authorize any other release of client information. Adult victims of family violence may request permission to see their file.

Follow-up

Adult victims of family violence are contacted by telephone soon after the critical incident to check on their well-being. The Victim Services worker may review the client's safety plan and help the client work out details. If charges are laid and a court date is set, the worker will arrange for a meeting to prepare a Victim Impact Statement and review the court procedures. If charges are not laid, Victim Services may still provide emotional support, and refer the client for further counselling/other professional assistance as needed and agreed to.

Training

Victim Services' staff attend annual conferences on family violence that address timely topics such as protection strategies, building community partnerships, domestic violence treatments and domestic violence from cultural perspectives.

Volunteers receive 36 hours of training over a three-month period. Topics include:

- Information on the criminal justice and child welfare systems
- Domestic violence
- Sexual assault
- Child abuse
- Preparing victim impact statements
- Basic communication skills
- Crisis intervention support
- Suicide intervention.

Further ongoing training is offered on a monthly basis, with volunteers requesting sessions on specific topics related to their work with victims. These two-hour sessions usually involve a guest speaker.

Complaints

If a client is not satisfied with the service or a problem arises, the Coordinator of Victim Services will address the issue. If the problem is not resolved with the Coordinator, the matter can be presented to the Executive Director of the Native Women's Association of the NWT for a final decision.

Linking With Other Agencies

Formal agreements guide the working relationships of Yellowknife Victim Services in serving the needs of victims of family violence.

- A draft protocol agreement (Appendix B) formalizes Yellowknife Victim Services acceptance of all family violence referrals from the RCMP. The agreement provides guidance on informing and contacting Victim Services, and contact with and follow-up with the victim.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix B) guides Yellowknife Victim Services coordination with the PPSC – NWT to assist victims of family violence with comprehensive support when they are involved in the criminal justice system. The Memorandum identifies shared roles and responsibilities for delivery of emotional support, information and assistance during and after an event (e.g. justice system preparation; victim access to Crown Prosecutor and Crown Witness Coordinator; bail hearings; court preparation; preliminary inquiry and trial support; informing victim of court progress; sentencing; post trial support; probation conditions; and appeals).

Yellowknife Victim Services will refer to, and accept referrals of victims of family violence from community agencies for example:

- Stanton Territorial Health Authority for medical treatment;
- YWCA Alison McAteer House for secure shelter and crisis intervention outreach, emotional support, advocacy, an Emergency Protection Order or other such orders, and referral to other community supports. A safe room is available at YWCA Alison McAteer House for use in interviewing and assisting to prepare the Victim Impact Statement.
- The Centre for Northern Families for emergency shelter for single and/or intoxicated women, emotional support and advocacy, and referral to other community supports.

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- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for mandatory reporting of child abuse, family counselling support and advocacy.
- Other agencies as appropriate.

Informal relations guide referrals between Yellowknife Victim Services, YWCA Alison McAteer House, the Centre for Northern Families, Stanton Territorial Health Authority and Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority. Victim Services referrals for victim safe shelter, emotional support and advocacy form the basis for more formalized interagency protocol agreements with these agencies. In addition to formal protocols, interagency protocols should address responsibilities of Yellowknife Victim Services and partner agencies in relation to family violence, for example:

- Procedures for communicating and exchanging information (e.g. sharing information on the status of an investigation and court proceedings; advising if a criminal investigation does not result in charges and/or conditions).
- Procedures for attending interviews with child welfare workers and follow-up referrals to community support agencies (e.g. Centre for Northern Families)
- Guidelines for requesting police assistance (e.g. staff/adult safety risk, child protection, executing access order).
- Guidelines for liaison (e.g. participation in protocol agreements, updating colleagues, advising other agencies of the lead in specific cases, consultation as needed to establish that a criminal offence was committed and knowing when to involve the police).
- Participation in interagency training and meetings.
- Making and receiving reports (e.g. non-emergency incidents of family violence; criminal offences of a non-emergency nature; encouraging and helping in the preparation of a Victim Impact Statement).

C. Public Prosecution Service of Canada, NWT Regional Office (PPSC – NWT)

Commitments

To the extent that its mandate and national policies allow, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, NWT Regional Office (PPSC – NWT) commits to the principles of the Yellowknife Interagency Family Violence and Abuse Protocol:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.

PPSC - NWT further commits to and advocates interagency acceptance of the Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime 2003,¹² as set out below.

The following principles are intended to promote fair treatment of victims and should be reflected in federal/provincial/territorial laws, policies and procedures:

1. Victims of crime should be treated with courtesy, compassion, and respect.
2. The privacy of victims should be considered and respected to the greatest extent possible.
3. All reasonable measures should be taken to minimize inconvenience to victims.
4. The safety and security of victims should be considered at all stages of the criminal justice process and appropriate measures should be taken when necessary to protect victims from intimidation and retaliation.

¹² Department of Justice Canada. 2003. *Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime 2003*

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5. Information should be provided to victims about the criminal justice system and the victim's role and opportunities to participate in criminal justice processes.
6. Victims should be given information, in accordance with prevailing law, policies, and procedures, about the status of the investigation; the scheduling, progress and final outcome of the proceedings; and the status of the offender in the correctional system.
7. Information should be provided to victims about available victim assistance services, other programs and assistance available to them, and means of obtaining financial reparation.
8. The views, concerns and representations of victims are an important consideration in criminal justice processes and should be considered in accordance with prevailing law, policies and procedures.
9. The needs, concerns and diversity of victims should be considered in the development and delivery of programs and services, and in related education and training.
10. Information should be provided to victims about available options to raise their concerns when they believe that these principles have not been followed.

Service Delivery

PPSC - NWT will:

- Decide whether to proceed with charges. When the decision to proceed is made, the Crown will vigorously prosecute cases of family violence and breaches of court orders (e.g. bail, probation, and Emergency Protection Orders).
- Protect the public, and in so doing in cases of family violence, ensure that in particular the victim of family violence is accorded protection, as well as any other potential victims the offender may harm in the future in a similar manner.
- Provide victims of family violence with information about the court process, the status or progress of specific cases, and laws regulating the possible use of testimonial aids.
- Encourage the victim to prepare a Victim Impact Statement for presentation to the court during sentencing.
- Make active referrals to other agencies.

Operations

Office hours are Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to noon, and 1:00 to 5:00 PM. There are no formal emergency services offered after office hours but all RCMP members have contact information that enables them to access Crown Prosecutors after hours. The purpose of after hours contact would typically be for legal advice.

Procedures

Defining Family Violence

There is no charge specific to domestic violence in the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Some of the *Criminal Code* provisions that may apply in cases of physical, psychological, financial, and sexual abuse include:

√assault	√criminal harassment ("stalking")
√aggravated assault	√forgery
√assault causing bodily harm	√uttering threats, intimidation
√assault with a weapon	√theft, extortion, fraud
√sexual assault	√forcible confinement
√aggravated sexual assault	√criminal negligence causing bodily harm/death
√sexual assault causing bodily harm	√murder, attempted murder and manslaughter
√breaches of court orders	√criminal breach of trust
	√failure to provide the necessities of life

In law, in considering whether a crime is committed, one must consider the actions of the accused, and the intent of the accused at the time. In most cases, a crime is not defined by who the victim is or what relationship the victim had to the offender at the time the crime happened. The law does not rely on whether an offence is defined as ‘family violence’ in order for a Crown Prosecutor to proceed with a prosecution. Family relationships between an accused and a victim will come out when the evidence is called, through the testimony of witnesses. Those relationships can be relevant during bail hearings (specific conditions around contact, places of residence, and access to children) and are relevant at the sentencing stage.

Guidance on domestic violence is provided in the PPSC Deskbook through a national policy and definition of domestic violence. For example, the PPSC Deskbook policy has a specific policy that deals with family violence cases and alerts Crown Prosecutors to the dynamics of family violence and special considerations that must be taken into account when dealing with cases involving family violence. Crown Prosecutors are expected to apply that policy when dealing with cases of family violence.

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Service Response to Victims of Family Violence

It is rare that the Crown's office is the first agency contacted by a person who is the victim of family violence. If the Crown receives a call where family violence is suspected or disclosed, the Crown will provide information and establish a positive rapport with the victim. The Crown must be careful at this stage not to probe or ask specific details as this could result in the person who is interviewing becoming a witness in the criminal proceedings. The Crown will encourage the victim to report the matter to the police so that it can be investigated.

In the large majority of cases, the Crown becomes involved in criminal cases after the RCMP investigation is concluded and the RCMP has laid a charge and has provided the file to the Crown Prosecutor for review. The Crown Prosecutor determines, based on evidence from the police investigation, and in accordance with PPSC national policy, if there is a reasonable prospect of conviction and if it is in the public interest to proceed with charges. The Crown Prosecutor and RCMP work as a team. The Crown Prosecutor may request that the RCMP conduct further investigation into the case. In some cases, the RCMP seek advice from the Crown before charges are laid.

In the majority of cases, the public interest usually favours proceeding with charges where family violence is involved.

Where a victim is reluctant or uncooperative, Crown counsel should make every reasonable effort to persuade the victim to testify. Where a victim refuses to cooperate, or recants her evidence, the Crown must reassess the case, and determine whether the case ought to proceed further. In making that assessment, the Crown considers among other factors the safety of the victim, while also considering the dignity of the victim and the overall protection of the public.

After an accused is arrested by police, he may be held in custody until trial or released on some form of bail. In some cases the accused will be released with the consent of the police or of the Crown. In such cases, the accused is usually released subject to certain conditions. Conditions are intended to protect or meet the safety needs of the victim and to secure the accused's attendance in Court. Possible conditions include: non-communication orders, firearms prohibitions, drug or alcohol prohibitions, reporting conditions, etc. There are no conditions that are automatically imposed; the Crown has to demonstrate why the conditions should be imposed and the Justice presiding over the bail hearing ultimately decides what the conditions of release will be. If there is concern that the accused will not abide by conditions or not appear in court, a bail hearing is

scheduled. Following the bail hearing the Justice may order the accused detained in custody or the Justice may order that he be released subject to conditions.

In response to the charge, the accused enters a plea of 'guilty' or 'not guilty'. If a 'guilty' plea is entered the case proceeds to sentencing. If a 'not guilty' plea is entered a date is set for trial. If the Crown elects to proceed by indictment a preliminary inquiry may be set.

If the accused pleads guilty or is found guilty the court is responsible for imposing a sentence. Two of the objectives of sentencing are to deter further family violence towards the victim and towards any other member of the public. Prior to sentencing every effort should be made to ensure the victim is contacted for her input into sentencing. Victim Impact Statements are considered in the sentencing. One of the goals of sentencing is to provide a deterrent to the offender and to others.

Crown Witness Coordinators work closely with victims and sometimes with the Victim Services Coordinator after the decision is made to prosecute the case. They attempt to make contact and arrange to meet a victim of family violence. The Crown Witness Coordinator:

- Provides information to the victim on the criminal justice system;
- Explains the role of the Crown Attorney in representing the public in the prosecution of charges against the accused;
- Supports the victim;
- Provides information about court procedures and the progress of the case, including whether the accused is in custody or released on bail;
- Assists the victim in reviewing her witness statement and preparing to testify in Court.

Crown Witness Coordinators should discuss with the victim the availability of referrals to other agencies (e.g. for counselling, emergency or transitional shelter, medical services or further police protection arising from a breach of bail or probation conditions). Support and preparation are important for the victim from the time of the charge through disposition of the case and sentencing to reduce the potential for her to become an uncooperative witness and to ensure her safety.

Safety

PPSC - NWT is concerned about public safety, and in particular the safety of the victim. The Crown will vigorously prosecute cases of family violence and breaches of court

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orders (e.g. Emergency Protection Orders, bail and probation). The Crown will seek sentences that reflect the severity of the offence.

Safeguards are in place to protect the worker and victim including:

- Strict sign-in procedure for all who are not PPSC employees.
- Cell phones for Crown Witness Coordinators and Crown Prosecutors, if needed.
- Procedures prohibiting meetings in private homes or unsafe places unless accompanied by a police officer.
- A 1-800 number that provides assistance 24 hours a day via PPSC if Crown Prosecutors or Crown Witness Coordinators are threatened.

Sharing Information

The public can attend court and the media can report on proceedings unless there is a publication ban or an order to close the courtroom has been issued. Court records become part of the public record. Information that is on the Crown file but did not come out in the public proceedings remains confidential and cannot usually be shared.

Follow-up

Prior to a trial, Crown Prosecutors and Crown Witness Coordinators contact witnesses and the victim to advise of bail conditions, trial date, review witness statements and help the victim prepare to testify. Throughout the prosecution, including the sentencing stage, the Crown Prosecutor or the Crown Witness Coordinator maintains contact with the victim.

Training

PPSC - NWT recognizes the benefits of family violence training (e.g. indicators, response, how to react and what to do) for Crown Prosecutors, Crown Witness Coordinators or frontline office staff. PPSC - NWT accepts invitations to participate with other agencies to discuss family violence and their service responses. PPSC - NWT staff and RCMP members regularly share training opportunities.

Complaints

If a victim is dissatisfied with her dealings with the Crown Prosecutor or Crown Witness Coordinator, she can address it directly with the Crown Prosecutor or Crown Witness Coordinator. If the matter cannot be resolved it can be brought to the attention of the PPSC - NWT Regional Director.

Linking With Other Agencies

A Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix B) guides Crown Prosecutors, Crown Witness Coordinators and Yellowknife Victim Services in providing victims of family violence with the best possible support throughout the criminal justice process.

Policies guide the team relationship between the Crown Prosecutor and the RCMP including:

- Procedures for communicating and exchanging information (e.g. sharing the investigation file; advising on conditions of release bail sentencing and probation; on breach of conditions).
- Guidelines for liaison (e.g. participation in protocol partnership, updating colleagues in agency, advising of agency lead on cases, liaison/consultation during investigation and case preparation consultation).

PPSC - NWT and RCMP have plans for a more formal arrangement (MOU) for their team relationship.

D. Stanton Territorial Health Authority (STHA)

Commitments

To the extent that its mandate allows the Stanton Territorial Health Authority is committed to:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.

Service Delivery

The Stanton Territorial Health Authority will:

- Routinely screen for medical reasons. Visual symptoms and signs or patient discussion may prompt the triage nurse to ask how the injury happened.
- Provide immediate, acute medical care to any person requiring such care subject to the assessment of injuries to patient through examination and diagnostic procedures.
- Focus on the medical, psychological, psychosocial and spiritual needs of the patient, address these needs and make appropriate referrals for ongoing medical and non-medical treatment with other community organizations.
- Ensure care is patient-centred.
- Re-admit a patient for further treatment if needed.
- Assess immediate safety needs of the patient if family violence and abuse is suspected or confirmed.
- Provide support through the Mental Health Team for the emotional and psychological effects of family violence if patient consents to these supports.

Operations

Acute Care Medical Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. STHA employs two full-time Medical Social Workers. The Medical Social Worker is available primarily for inpatient support from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

STHA uses a multidisciplinary team approach. In the case of patients who are victims of family violence and abuse, the multidisciplinary team would consist of physicians, nurses, medical social workers and mental health professionals.

Procedures

Victims of family violence may arrive at the Emergency Ward on their own, with family or friends, by ambulance, with the RCMP or be referred by YWCA Alison McAteer House, Centre for Northern Families or Yellowknife Victim Services. STHA also accepts referrals from other community agencies.

Intake/Disclosure

The patient presenting at the STHA Emergency Department is assessed by a triage nurse who listens to, observes and documents the patient's complaint, medical condition and vital signs. The triage nurse follows a checklist to gather initial medical file information. The patient's medical condition and needs are first priority.

Where family violence or abuse is suspected or disclosed a healthcare team will:

- Listen carefully to the patient's presenting problem and document patient information and disclosure of family violence to the patient's medical record. During routine medical screening, the triage nurse may inquire about the source of the injury/presenting problem.
- Be notified of family violence disclosure from the medical record (e.g. "I was raped or I was beaten up"). The triage nurse may discuss their suspicion of family violence with other members of the emergency team. Suspicion is not documented on the patient file.
- Encourage the patient to identify and contact supportive family or friends for emotional comfort during their treatment.

Examination and Assessment

The Stanton emergency team is aware of the patient's physical and emotional health. The team assesses presenting injuries through physical examination and mental health assessment. It acknowledges that victims of family violence may be fearful. Every effort is made to explain examinations and procedures and minimize further emotional stress to the patient. The attending emergency team allows time for questions and responses in an

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informative and supportive manner. The patient is reassured that she is believed and not alone, and that her information is confidential and will stay within the hospital.

Psychiatric nurses may be asked to conduct an intake assessment of the patient in the Emergency Department if depression or other mental health issues are evident. If a patient discloses that they are planning to harm themselves or others, the Mental Health Act can be invoked, where a person can be detained for 48 hours for assessment.

Referral

When a patient discloses or there is heightened suspicion of abuse, the emergency team informs the patient of supports available both within and outside STHA. The immediate safety of the patient is assessed if family violence and abuse is suspected or confirmed. Verbal and written information is provided to the victim about resources available in the community (e.g. help line information; information cards with numbers of shelters and support services; and the RCMP emergency number).

The emergency team seeks consent from the patient to refer the patient and her children to:

- RCMP. With the patient's consent the RCMP will investigate and further document evidence of the abuse for court proceedings. In the case of visible (physical) injury, the RCMP will be called to collect evidence/take pictures. If sexual assault is disclosed and the victim consents, the emergency team will perform a physical examination that involves using the 'sexual assault kit' that addresses physical and forensic evidence. The 'sexual assault kit' is given directly to the RCMP for evidence.
- Yellowknife Victim Services. When the RCMP have been contacted by Stanton's emergency or medical social worker to report family violence, Yellowknife Victim Services will respond/co-operate with the RCMP. The role of Yellowknife Victim Services is to provide emotional support, information about the legal process and assist in the preparation of a Victim Impact Statement. Yellowknife Victim Services may be called for emotional support directly by the emergency team/medical social worker when there has been disclosure of abuse but no reporting to the RCMP.
- A family violence shelter. The patient will be informed by the emergency team about the family violence shelter and emotional support options both in and outside Yellowknife. YWCA Alison McAteer House staff can meet with patients at the hospital. If the patient is aggressive (under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol), emergency support and shelter may be arranged through the Centre for Northern Families. Where patient safety in the community is at high risk,

- relocation (transportation) to another community via the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority Family Violence Program can be arranged.
- Child protection. If children are deemed to be affected by or suffering from the abuse or are abused, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority Child Protection is contacted.
 - The Stanton Mental Health Team. If the client is displaying symptoms of depression, a referral is made to the Mental Health Team for assessment and counselling.
 - Income Security Programs: If short-term financial assistance is required Income Security Programs may be contacted.
 - The Centre for Northern Families for advocacy support and third party interventions.

Safety

Where family abuse is suspected or disclosed, the emergency team views patient safety as a main priority. If the offender is or is suspected to be in the building and there is an immediate threat to the patient, the emergency department can be ‘locked down’ and the RCMP contacted to remove the offender. The offender is separated from the patient during patient assessment. Access to the facility is restricted from 8:00 pm to 8:00 am, with entry after hours limited to the Emergency Department. Visitors must sign in. Security is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to assist staff with safety issues. Additional security services are contracted on an as needed basis and may be used to protect a patient harmed due to family violence and abuse. There are several “safe rooms” within the hospital. Policies and procedures are in place to protect victims and staff.

Sharing Information

Documentation is vital if charges are laid. The patient medical record is considered a legal document owned by Stanton Territorial Health Authority. It provides the patient’s name, address, telephone number, NWT Health Care information, next of kin, allergies, medications, past and current medical history, and presenting condition/injury. Brief notes on the incident are also included in the initial intake. As the examination progresses, information on the examination, medical procedure results, patient emotional and psychological state, treatment, medications prescribed, referrals within Stanton Territorial Health Authority and to community agencies, as well as patient comments are added to the patient medical record.

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Patients are treated with dignity and respect, and informed and mutual decisions guide the boundaries of her treatment. It is explained to the patient that although her information is confidential, she can consent to sharing her information with agencies that support her. Patients have a legal right to refuse to consent to any treatment unless they are deemed incompetent. Patients must sign a “Release of Information Form” for any information to be released to an individual or agency. With the exception of legislated mandatory disclosure as in the case of child abuse, a court order is required to release information without patient consent.

Follow-up

Patients may be contacted for additional appointments with medical professionals. Presently STHA has limited capacity for referral follow-up.

Training

Physicians or specialty-trained Registered Nurses administer the sexual assault kit, which can take up to two hours in duration with the assistance of a Registered Nurse and the RCMP.

Complaints

If a patient has any concerns regarding the service, stay or treatment at STHA, they are encouraged to submit their concerns to the Quality & Risk Management Coordinator/ Patient Representative. All concerns are investigated and responses are provided to the patient in writing. Issues and concerns are dealt with in a confidential manner.

Linking with Other Agencies

Stanton Territorial Health Authority refers and accepts referrals of victims of family violence from community agencies. STHA works with the:

- RCMP if victim safety is at risk and a criminal investigation is warranted. STHA will seek victim’s consent to contact the RCMP to document evidence (e.g. pictures of victim’s physical injuries, ‘sexual assault kit’).
- YWCA Alison McAteer House for secure shelter and crisis intervention outreach, emotional support, advocacy, application for an Emergency Protection Order or other such orders and referral to other community supports.
- The Centre for Northern Families for emergency shelter for single and/or intoxicated women, emotional support and advocacy and referral to other community supports.
- Yellowknife Victim Services for support, information, court accompaniment and assistance to prepare a Victim Impact Statement.
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for mandatory reporting of child abuse, and family counselling support.

- Income Security Programs for financial assistance for basic needs.

Informal relations guide referrals between Stanton Territorial Health Authority and the abovementioned agencies. Stanton referrals for victim safe shelter, emotional and counselling support, child protection, financial support and advocacy form the basis for more formalized interagency protocols with these agencies. Interagency protocols should address responsibilities of Stanton Territorial Health Authority and other agencies in relation to family violence, for example:

- Procedures for communicating and exchanging information (e.g. sharing patient information, reporting of family violence incidents, cooperating in criminal investigation).
- Guidelines for requesting police assistance (e.g. staff/adult safety risk, child protection, abuse is criminal or suspected criminal act).
- Guidelines for liaison (e.g. participation in protocol agreements, updating colleagues in agency, advising of agency lead on cases, consultation as needed to establish that a criminal offence was committed and knowing when to involve the police).
- Participation in interagency training and meetings.

E. Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority (YHSSA)

Commitments

The Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority (YHSSA) commits to:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.

Service Delivery

YHSSA will provide:

- *Child and Family Services* for the care, safety and well being of children to protect them from violence according to the Child and Family Services Act. Social workers appointed under the Child and Family Services Act receive reports and initiate child protection investigations if there is an indication that the safety of a child has been compromised or may be at risk of being compromised. The provision of a broad range of services is dependant on factors such as the degree of risk to the child and the parents' motivation and capacity to address their children's identified needs.
- *Counselling Services through YHSSA Family Counselling and Great Slave Community Health Clinic* for victims of family violence and their children; and individual counselling services for perpetrators of family violence.
- *Support and services to adults with mental health needs and family violence issues at the New Horizons Centre*. Individuals that are experiencing family violence issues can also contact social work staff at New Horizons Centre for assistance. The New Horizons Centre can provide counselling and client referral to other appropriate programs and services in the community.

- Funding support for YWCA Alison McAteer House. YHSSA contracts the YWCA to deliver family violence shelter services to the community in Yellowknife and the surrounding area.
- Transportation assistance for victims of family violence and their children to the nearest family violence shelter in the NWT in the event that YWCA Alison McAteer House is unable to provide services.
- Case management services for adults who have mental illness, mental disabilities or a brain injury. Case managers assist clients to access needed services in the community, such as: day programming, counselling, supported housing or other relevant services and programs.
- Voluntary services for families with children that have been exposed to family violence where there are no child protection concerns. Services provided or contracted may include counselling; in-home support; respite care; parenting programs; services for improving the family's financial situation; services for improving the family's housing; assisting family members in gaining access to drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation; family mediation; and other services agreed to by the Social Worker (on behalf of the Director of Child and Family Services) and the parent(s).
- Referrals. YHSSA provides other services to community members through physicians, nurses, home care, rehabilitation practitioners and social workers. As a result, often YHSSA is the first point of contact for families experiencing family violence and frequently acts as a referral mechanism to other relevant programs and services in the community.

Operations

Family and community social workers respond to child and family issues during regular office hours - Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. There are also counsellors on staff who provide services Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Child and Family Services staff provide after hours emergency response as needed.

YHSSA also employs special needs coordinators available from Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

Procedures

Intake/Screening/Assessment

YHSSA will accept referrals from community agencies, advocates and self-referrals. A person requesting or referred for counselling services will be screened for family violence

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and abuse by counsellors. Screening is sensitive to the comfort and protection of privacy of the victim.

If abuse is suspected but not identified, counsellors may ask direct questions (e.g. Has your partner ever slapped, hit or shoved you? Does your partner constantly criticize you or put you down? Does your partner threaten you? Do you feel afraid of him? Is your partner possessive and jealous and tries to control you?).

If abuse is identified:

- Personal safety and appropriate support and treatment options will be discussed with the client.
- Information is given regarding alternative community resources available to the client.

Further assessment by clinical staff will explore and assess risk factors and safety issues for future abuse of the victim and children.

Community social workers under the Child and Family Services Program will focus on the extent to which family violence affects the needs and best interests of the children.

If a client in crisis calls any of the YHSSA social services programs described previously, staff members will:

- Determine the immediate safety of the caller and their ability to talk.
- Develop a plan to get the client and children to a safe place (i.e. a friend, family member, shelter).
- Contact and accompany the RCMP to an (ongoing) incident.
- Work with the client to determine needs and make referrals to appropriate service providers where needed.
- Follow-up with the client as necessary.
- Arrange for crisis counselling if a client fears for their life or is suicidal.

Intervention

The goal of all services is to provide safer options to the victim and their children and to help the victim gain control of their life.

Counselling services address:

- The need for a victim support network;
- Empowering the victim and strategizing to increase personal control;

- Acknowledging that the victim is not responsible for the offender's behaviour;
- Understanding abuse and control;
- Victim safety and encouraging the development of a safety plan;
- Exploring the potential consequences of continuing in the relationship versus leaving the relationship;
- Strategies to help the victim (e.g. safety plan, housing options, child custody, emotional support network, financial and legal support).

In the event that family violence is suspected, an in-depth individual assessment will be initiated with each partner and individual counseling will be provided as necessary. Couples (marital) counselling will not be offered where abuse has been disclosed. Individual and group support and counselling is available to abuse victims and children who have experienced violence. YHSSA will, where possible, keep families together (mother and child) when providing child protection. They will also obtain legal status for a child's protection through agreements developed in conjunction with families or through a family court hearing and/or arrange for foster home services to provide short- or long-term care for children under apprehension.

YHSSA has made a commitment to develop a policy regarding clinical work with victims and perpetrators of family violence, and their children.

The YHSSA Family Violence Policy will address the circumstances, if any, in which couple counseling might be considered when family violence has been a concern.

The YHSSA Family Violence policy will be based on a feminist perspective since this most accurately explains the etiology of family violence and guides the most effective and appropriate clinical interventions for its victims and perpetrators.

YHSSA recognizes that, as a community, Yellowknife does not currently have the capacity to provide comprehensive programming for perpetrators necessary to adequately address their issues and thus to assess their readiness for couple work. For this reason, and given that the safety of victims and their children is paramount, no couple counseling will be offered where family violence is suspected until the YHSSA Family Violence Policy has been finalized and the capacity is present to safely provide the service. All couples requesting counseling will be asked to undergo individual risk assessments of all types of violence, including physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual.

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

In keeping with the spirit of the Family Violence Protocol, YHSSA commits to presenting the final draft of the Family Violence Policy to the Coalition Against Family Violence for discussion and review.

Referral

YHSSA will refer victims and their children to appropriate services and programs in the community. YHSSA will seek victim consent prior to referring to:

- The Centre for Northern Families for emergency shelter, assessment, emotional support and advocacy.
- YWCA Alison McAteer House for emergency shelter, assessment, an Emergency Protection Order or crisis support.
- The RCMP to report and investigate abuse. Victim consent is not required when child protection is the reason for this referral.
- Shelters outside of Yellowknife or a local hotel.
- Yellowknife Victim Services for help with the criminal justice system.
- Great Slave Community Health Clinic for mental health assessment, treatment and/or counselling.
- Income Security Programs for longer-term financial support.
- Stanton Territorial Health Authority for medical, mental health and psychiatric assessment, treatment and/or counselling.
- Legal aid/lawyer for legal matters including child custody, lease/mortgage.

While making a referral YHSSA will actively contact and advocate on behalf of the victim and children if the victim consents to this support.

Safety

The safety of victims of family violence and children is a high priority of the YHSSA. Counsellors and community social workers will work with the client to develop a safety plan.

If shelter is identified as an immediate safety need, YHSSA will inform the client of different options including:

- A referral to YWCA Alison McAteer House for emergency shelter or to apply for an Emergency Protection Order which can remove the offender from the home and establish contact conditions.
- Funding for transportation for the victim and children to travel to shelters in other NWT communities if Yellowknife facilities are full.

- Funding for basic needs (e.g. damage deposits/overdue utilities bills to maintain children in the home and keep families together).

Sharing Information

Child and Family Services must manage the sharing of information within the parameters of the Child and Family Services Act.

Family Counselling Services and New Horizons Centre must obtain written consent from the client before sharing information, unless the client is at risk of self harm or harming others, or in the event of reporting requirements under the Child and Family Services Act or Mental Health Act.

Follow-up

Services are provided to clients until no longer needed or requested.

Training

YHSSA is committed to participation by its staff in training opportunities on family violence issues that may be provided through this Protocol Steering Committee or by any individual agencies.

Complaints

If a client is not satisfied with the service or a problem arises, they have the option of forwarding their complaint in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The review and final resolution of the complaint is the responsibility of the CEO.

As issues arise between agencies they are usually dealt with by meeting to discuss issues and developing a mutually agreed upon resolution to solve the dilemma. YHSSA funding agreements or contracts in place with non-government agencies have clauses that specifically deal with issues of conflict and spell out the responsibilities of both parties in conflict resolution.

Linking with Other Agencies

YHSSA refers and accepts referrals of victims of family violence from community agencies. YHSSA works with the:

- RCMP if victim safety is at risk and a criminal investigation is warranted.
YHSSA community social workers are contacted to accompany investigating members when child protection is an issue.

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

- YWCA Alison McAteer House for secure shelter and crisis intervention outreach, emotional support, advocacy, Emergency Protection Order applications or other orders, and referral to other community supports.
- Centre for Northern Families for emergency shelter for single and/or intoxicated women, emotional support and advocacy, and referral to other community supports.
- YWCA Transitional Housing, and Yellowknife Housing Authority for transitional and longer-term housing.
- Yellowknife Victim Services for support, information, and assistance preparing Victim Impact Statements.
- Income Security Programs for financial assistance for basic needs.
- Other government and non-government agencies as appropriate.

Informal relations guide referrals between YHSSA and the above-mentioned agencies. YHSSA referrals for victim safe shelter, emotional support, financial support and advocacy form the basis for more formalized interagency protocols with these agencies. Interagency protocols should address the responsibilities of YHSSA and other agencies in relation to family violence and abuse, for example:

- Procedures for communicating and exchanging information (e.g. sharing file information, reporting of criminal family violence incidents, cooperating in criminal investigation).
- Guidelines for requesting police assistance (e.g. staff/adult safety risk, child protection, abuse is criminal or suspected criminal act).
- Guidelines for liaison (e.g. participation in protocol partnership, updating colleagues in agency, advising of agency lead on cases, consultation as needed to establish that a criminal offence was committed and knowing when to involve the police).
- Participation in interagency training and meetings.

YHSSA funding agreements with YWCA Alison McAteer House and Centre for Northern Families provide for service delivery objectives, reporting, accountability and dispute resolution measures

F. YWCA Alison McAteer House

Commitments

YWCA Alison McAteer House commits to:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.

Service Delivery

YWCA Alison McAteer House provides services to women living in the shelter as well as those who choose to live elsewhere. Specific services include:

- Safe refuge to any sober woman 18 years of age or over, who is in danger and in need of shelter from physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial abuse, or neglect.
- Safety, food, shelter and hygiene items to women and their children who are residing in the shelter.
- An environment where women feel supported to make healthy choices, engage in self-exploration, and seek information.
- Crisis intervention to residents as well as the community through the Crisis Line and walk-in appointments, which includes referrals to appropriate services.
- Both group and individual emotional support specific to the needs of women and children who are victims of violence..
- "Role modeling" of appropriate parenting routines, life skills (chores), relationships, communication, etc.
- As a designate under the NWT Protection Against Family Violence Act, assistance to victims of family violence seeking to apply for an Emergency Protection Order.

Operations

YWCA Alison McAteer House emergency shelter and emotional supports are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Crisis Line for Abused Women (873-8257) is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is available to all NWT residents. Services are provided for shelter residents, walk in clients and clients who call the shelter.

Procedures

Intake/Screening/Assessment

YWCA Alison McAteer House accepts referrals from community support agencies, victims and victim advocates (e.g. RCMP, Stanton Territorial Health Authority, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, Yellowknife Victim Services). Alternatively, the Crisis Line for Abused Women (available to all residents of the NWT) may be contacted when a victim is in crisis.

When a victim of family violence telephones the Crisis Line or presents at YWCA Alison McAteer House, she is listened to, screened for family violence and abuse and immediate safety needs, and supported (e.g. told she is believed, not alone and does not deserve to be abused). If a victim is calling from outside Yellowknife, Crisis Line workers discuss options for safe shelter available in her home community (e.g. friends, relatives, an Emergency Protection Order) and/or emergency shelter at YWCA Alison McAteer House. They believe that victims should be empowered to make their own decisions.

Questions initially asked on the Crisis Line include: “Are you safe? Hurt? Where is he? Where are you? Do you need to come now to the shelter? Do you need the police called?” When a caller does not identify abusive behaviour on the Crisis Line, the worker will probe within a context suggesting that abuse is widespread and the general public may not fully understand the meaning of abuse.

In extenuating circumstances occasionally during a critical incident, Crisis Line workers can use NorthwesTel’s call tracing capabilities (e.g. when a victim ended her call prematurely, seemed suicidal, spoke of a child being abused, hung up without giving an address or the call was disconnected). If necessary, the RCMP can be dispatched to the residence.

Where victim immediate needs are for shelter, initial screening and documentation include: victim name, children names, community address, age, disclosure and/or story (identification) of abuse, information relevant to a victim and children safety plan, health information needed by staff (e.g. allergies, infectious illnesses), medication (prescription or over the counter medications are held by staff), and need for medical attention.

The emergency shelter program provides secure shelter to women 18 years and older and their children. The priority for admission is any woman leaving an abusive situation, whether or not she has children

Female children of abused women including adult female children who live with the victim and male children up to age 16 are welcome at the shelter, if space is available. Women can stay in the shelter for up to 6 weeks. However, a stay may be longer in cases where structural barriers limit the woman's safety.

YWCA Alison McAteer House workers orient the victim and children to the facility by touring the facility, pointing out safety features and amenities. A *Shelter Information Booklet* is given to the victim outlining shelter rules for communal living and residential safety. Clients are advised that no alcohol or drug use is allowed at the shelter. Inebriated or high women are not allowed to stay at the shelter. Women who use substances are assisted to secure safe shelter at the Centre for Northern Families. Staff use discretion with respect to substance abuse issues if they feel the client is able to follow directions and go immediately to their room to sleep. If children are involved, staff will work with the mother to find a safe relative or friend to care for the children. If no one is available, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority may become involved.

Workers assess risk factors for future violence and assist clients in developing safety plans. A danger assessment tool is used for assessment (Appendix D). The danger assessment tool enables staff to work with the victim to develop a safety plan and begin to set goals for taking personal responsibility for her own safety.

Intervention

The role of YWCA Alison McAteer House staff is to help women look at all their choices, consider the possible consequences, and assist in identifying and limiting/removing barriers to healthy choices. The victim-centred approach encourages women to set goals for themselves, make informed choices, and make decisions for themselves. Self-determination of clients is a priority. Although women are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety, YWCA Alison McAteer House recognizes that social circumstances and systemic barriers can limit the extent to which a woman can be self-determining.

YWCA Alison McAteer House workers deliver individual and group support in either a residential or outreach setting. Victims are supported with:

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

- Information on the dynamics of family violence and referrals to other community supports (e.g. YWCA Transitional Housing Program and Yellowknife Housing Authority public housing);
- Assistance with the family law system (spousal maintenance, custody and access, child support and accommodation);
- Safety planning;
- Access to affordable and safe housing, and to legal and medical services;
- Mental health and addiction services where required;
- Employment and income support.

Workers offer the victim emotional support and encouragement to make her own decisions. Crisis intervention support is available to women in crisis presenting in person or on the Crisis Line. Workers are empathetic to, and non-judgmental of a woman's behaviour or situation, respectful and accepting of their decision/choice.

YWCA Alison McAteer House workers support the victim and her children during their stay at the emergency shelter. Childcare and emotional support are available to children exposed to family violence and abuse.

Referral

YWCA Alison McAteer House staff actively refer victims of family violence. Through the Outreach Program victims are able to meet with YWCA Alison McAteer House workers in safe locations in the community away from YWCA Alison McAteer House. For example, staff meet with victims who present at the Stanton Hospital emergency ward for medical treatment, and who disclose abuse and are in need of shelter. YWCA Alison McAteer House refers to the Centre for Northern Families if the client is intoxicated. Other referrals explained and offered to victims include:

- RCMP to report and investigate offences.
- Yellowknife Victim Services for information on the criminal justice system, help and accompaniment with court processes or help preparing a Victim Impact Statement.
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for transfer to another shelter if Alison McAteer House is full.
- YHSSA Family Counselling Services for clinical counselling.
- Stanton Territorial Health Authority emergency, Great Slave Community Health Clinic, or Centre for Northern Families Drop-In Clinic for medical and mental health examination/assessment, treatment and/or counselling.
- Income Security Programs for financial support.

- YWCA Transitional Housing for short-term housing.
- Yellowknife Housing Authority for long-term housing.
- Other community supports as needed.

Informal agreements guide referral relationships with other agencies.

Safety

YWCA Alison McAteer House holds victim safety as its highest priority. In support of victim safety, YWCA Alison McAteer House offers a secure facility for emergency shelter, danger assessment and safety planning for clients. In 2005, YWCA Alison McAteer House was designated as an initial contact for victims seeking an Emergency Protection Order under the NWT Protection Against Family Violence Act. Staff help women understand the Act and the options it provides. Staff also conduct initial screening to establish if the situation is an emergency, the applicant is in a family relationship and the situation is violent or abusive. If these criteria are met, staff can connect the applicant with a designated Justice of the Peace who can issue the Emergency Protection Order.

YWCA Alison McAteer House is a high security facility with secure windows and doors, high fences, outdoor lighting, security cameras, a front-door intercom system, and telephone and intercom system answered by staff only. If there is a phone call for a shelter client, the worker answers - "I can take a message, and if that person is here or if she comes in, the message will be passed on." Calls made from YWCA Alison McAteer House are blocked from display on "call display" telephones. Weapons are prohibited (e.g. firearms, knives).

Males sixteen years of age and older are not allowed in the shelter. Exceptions are male professionals, RCMP or spiritual leaders who must have an appointment booked in advance and their identity verified by calling the agency. All visitors and outside community agency personnel are asked to sign an "Oath of Confidentiality" before entering the shelter.

If a woman leaves the shelter and she is not heard from for 24 hours, the RCMP is called and a "Missing Persons" report is filed. Any resident physically abusing another is discharged from the shelter. YWCA Alison McAteer House will attempt to look for women who choose to leave the shelter without giving notice of their absence, before involving the police in a missing person's search.

Sharing Information

A client has the right to see her file. The procedure for this is as follows:

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

- A client must make a request to the Shelter Supervisor to access her own file.
- While the file remains the property of the YWCA, the information within the file can be shared with the client. The Supervisor discusses with the woman what she hopes to gain from seeing her file. The Supervisor is present when the resident accesses her file to answer any questions and concerns.

Clients are advised that all information shared within YWCA Alison McAteer House will remain confidential. Release of client information must be authorized by the client in writing. Release of client information without victim consent may occur in special circumstances (e.g. any disclosures regarding child abuse whether physical, emotional, psychological or sexual will be reported to Social Services Child Protection).

When a child is considered by shelter staff to be in need of protection a referral to the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority will be made and the client will be encouraged to be an active participant in this referral.

Returning to the family home and/or the abusive partner is not a reason to make such a referral, unless shelter staff believe the client is not willing or able to protect her children.

Follow-up

Crisis Line clients are encouraged to contact YWCA Alison McAteer House by telephone at any time to discuss their situation. When a client leaves the shelter, she is advised by the staff that YWCA Alison McAteer House is available to assist them in the future if needed.

Training

YWCA Alison McAteer House staff receive ongoing family violence training. Training can occur during daily staff shift exchanges, staff supervision, and/or monthly staff meetings. Topics include: the dynamics of family violence; safety planning; child abuse; communication skills; crisis intervention counselling techniques; priorities of shelter; and Emergency Protection Orders.

Complaints

At times clients feel that they have been mistreated. They have the right to have their complaints heard and understood. All complaints about staff will be forwarded to the Clinical Supervisor. Should a client have a complaint about a staff member, they are encouraged to speak with the supervisor. Clients are asked if they have taken the issue up

with the staff member and whether the issue was resolved. If speaking to the staff member has not resolved the issue for them, clients are invited to speak with the Clinical Supervisor. If they feel, after speaking with the Clinical Supervisor, that the issue is still not resolved, they can contact the YWCA Executive Director. Staff can provide residents with the contact information. The Executive Director's decision is final.

Linking With Other Agencies

YWCA Alison McAteer House refers and accepts referrals of victims of family violence from community agencies. YWCA Alison McAteer House works with the:

- RCMP if victim safety is at risk and a criminal investigation is warranted.
- Centre for Northern Families for emergency shelter, other programs, and advocacy supports.
- Stanton Territorial Health Authority for victim assessment and treatment of physical injury, emotional and mental health.
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for transportation to another shelter, reporting of child abuse, family counselling support and advocacy.
- YWCA Transitional Housing, and Yellowknife Housing Authority for transitional and longer-term housing.
- Yellowknife Victim Services for support, information about court processes and assistance preparing a Victim Impact Statement. YWCA Alison McAteer House provides a safe room for Victim Services to meet with and interview victims.
- Income Security Programs for financial assistance for basic needs.

Informal relations guide referrals between YWCA Alison McAteer House and the above-mentioned agencies. YWCA Alison McAteer House referrals for emergency, transitional and long-term shelter; legal, emotional and counselling support, financial support and advocacy form the basis for more formalized interagency protocols with these agencies. Interagency protocols should address responsibilities of YWCA Alison McAteer House and community agencies in relation to responding to family violence, for example:

- Procedures for communicating and exchanging information (e.g. sharing file information, reporting of criminal family violence incidents, cooperating in criminal investigation).
- Guidelines for requesting police assistance (e.g. staff/adult safety risk, child protection, abuse is criminal or suspected criminal act).
- Guidelines for referring intoxicated or high victims of family violence to the Centre for Northern Families.
- Guidelines for referring victims when YWCA Alison McAteer House is full or a victim is at extreme risk (e.g. family violence shelters outside Yellowknife,

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for financial support for hotel and transportation).
- Guidelines for liaison (e.g. participation in protocol agreements, updating colleagues in agency, advising of agency lead on cases, consultation as needed to establish that a criminal offence was committed and knowing when to involve the police).
 - Participation in interagency training and meetings.

G. Centre For Northern Families

Commitments

The Centre for Northern Families commits to:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.

Service Delivery

The Centre for Northern Families provides:

- Assistance in person or by telephone in emergency circumstances to women in violent situations.
- Longer term assistance with emotional support and advocacy to women living in violent situations.
- Emergency shelter. The Emergency Housing Program provides shelter to women in crisis who have been sexually assaulted, battered women who cannot access the shelter because it is full, single women and women with psychiatric or emotional disorders.
- A drop-in medical clinic once a week.
- An all-day sexual health clinic once a week, with Nurse Practitioners
- Drop-in centre support. Women and their families are welcome to come to the Centre for emotional support, information, referral, advocacy, assistance, clothing, food, laundry facilities, a shower, company or just a hot cup of coffee and a meal.

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

- Office of Yellowknife Inuit Katujjiqatigiit, whose goal is to develop culturally-specific programs
- Immigrant and New Canadians program, offering educational programs and advocacy
- Advocacy for victims of violence. Women are empowered to identify their needs and access their own supports (i.e. legal aid, the RCMP, child protection/welfare, income support, landlord/tenancy).
- Crisis support, self-assessment and action planning. Intervention and short-term support (e.g. safety planning and goal setting) is available on an interim basis to women and their families during the waiting period prior to their admittance into treatment or counselling programs.
- Third party intervention and child supervision support. The Centre's role is an independent, third-party intervener ensuring child and woman safety, and a less threatening environment for parental visits.

Operations

The Centre and emergency shelter is staffed 24 hours per day and seven days a week. The Drop-In Centre is operated Monday through Friday, 9am to 5 pm.

Procedures

Intake/Screening

Victims of family violence referred by another agency and who self-identify are welcome to drop-in to the Centre for Northern Families. Intake may occur in person or by telephone. Depending on the circumstances, victims are referred to the RCMP, Stanton Territorial Health Authority and/or to YWCA Alison McAteer House. Victims who choose not to access any of those options are encouraged and provided transportation to come to the Centre.

Assessment/Intervention

A woman in a violent situation calling the Centre would be asked questions to a) determine the level of jeopardy; b) confirm the criminal nature of violence; c) provide information on resources and legal protections; and d) find out what service or support they perceive they need. Depending on the circumstances, the staff person asks the woman if she is able to or feels comfortable going to or calling the RCMP, YWCA Alison McAteer House or Stanton Territorial Hospital. Depending on the response, staff may direct the woman to phone back if there is a difficulty in accessing services or will seek permission to make preliminary calls to those agencies to facilitate access to service. If required and permission is granted, the staff person will call other agencies to ensure the resources are in place for the woman.

If a victim of violence and abuse cannot access services or is unsatisfied with the services they received, the Centre will advocate on her behalf. The Centre will let the agency know that the woman did not receive the service she thought was available or in a way that was supportive to her. The Centre will often write letters, arrange meetings and/or attend mediations or hearings on behalf of or with women. The Centre will review laws, policies and regulations that govern service delivery agencies and advocate for individuals and systemic change.

Referral

The Centre for Northern Families refers to:

- The RCMP if information provided by the victim indicates a violent or abusive incident.
- YWCA Alison McAteer House for an Emergency Protection Order, secure shelter, and emotional support.
- Stanton Territorial Health Authority, Great Slave Community Health Clinic, YHSSA, Victims Services for physical or emotional needs.
- Legal Aid and lawyers.
- Income Security Programs for financial assistance for basic needs.
- Victim Services.

Safety

The Centre for Northern Families provides overflow emergency shelter to victims of violence and particularly victims of violence who are ineligible for admission to YWCA Alison McAteer House (e.g. due to the influence of drugs or alcohol). The Drop-In Centre provides a place for women and, where applicable, their children and partners to meet in a safe, comfortable and secure environment. The Centre stocks a small amount of emergency personal care and infant care supplies.

Staff are not permitted to attend or accompany victims of violence to/at their residence.

Sharing Information

Documentation is kept to a minimum due to the potential for files to be called as evidence in court. Staff complete an intake form that has family violence and abuse indicated as a factor that gives rise to a request for assistance. The form also indicates the specific program or service the client accessed as a remedy.

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

Confidentiality

All staff and volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement at the time of hiring. Organizational policies are in place that protect client confidentiality and management of files.

The Centre uses forms that give specific directions for the release of confidential information (issues specific and time sensitive) regarding women and their families who access services at the Centre.

Follow-up

The Centre follows up with clients by providing advocacy support.

Training

The Centre will take advantage of any family violence related training opportunities offered through this Protocol.

Complaints

Complaints can be made to the Executive Director whose decision is final.

Linking with Other Agencies

The Centre for Northern Families refers and accepts referrals of victims of family violence from community agencies. The Centre works with the:

- RCMP if victim safety is at risk and a criminal investigation is warranted.
- YWCA Alison McAteer House for secure shelter and crisis intervention outreach, emotional support, and an application for an Emergency Protection Order.
- Stanton Territorial Health Authority for victim assessment and treatment of physical injury, emotional and mental health.
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for mandatory reporting of child abuse, and family counselling support.
- YWCA Transitional Housing
- Yellowknife Housing Authority for longer-term housing.
- Yellowknife Victim Services for support, information on court processes, court accompaniment, assistance preparing a Victim Impact Statement and attendance in child welfare interviews.
- Income Security Programs for financial assistance for basic needs.
- Other community supports as may be required.

Informal relations guide referrals between the Centre for Northern Families and the above-mentioned agencies. Centre for Northern Families referrals for emergency,

transitional and long-term shelter; legal, emotional and counselling support, financial support and advocacy form the basis for more formalized interagency protocols with these agencies. Interagency protocols should address responsibilities of the Centre for Northern Families and other front-line agencies in relation to family violence, for example:

- Procedures for communicating and exchanging information (e.g. sharing file information, reporting of criminal family violence incidents, cooperating in criminal investigation).
- Guidelines for requesting police assistance (e.g. staff/adult safety risk, child protection, abuse is criminal or suspected criminal act).
- Guidelines for accepting intoxicated or high victims of family violence referrals from other agencies.
- Guidelines for referring victims when Centre for Northern Families is full or victim is in extreme risk.
- Guidelines for liaison (e.g. participation in protocol partnership, updating colleagues in agency, advising of agency lead on cases, consultation as needed to establish that a criminal offence was committed and knowing when to involve the police).
- Participation in interagency training and meetings.

H. Income Security Programs (Canada/NWT Service Centre, NWT Education, Culture and Employment)

Commitments

To the extent that its mandate allows, Income Security Programs commits to:

1. Actions that keep victims safe.
2. Services that hear and respect victims' voices.
3. Active participation to make sure this Protocol is as effective as possible.
4. Open, honest and respectful communication with those involved in this Protocol and others who wish to get involved.
5. Ongoing training about family violence and sharing training with others.
6. Promoting family violence awareness within our agencies and in the community.
7. Responding to adult victims of family violence in culturally relevant ways.
8. Updating our agency's policies to empower adult victims of family violence and provide them with tools for managing risk.
9. Managing conflict that might arise between agencies in positive and purposeful ways.
10. Linking this protocol with the child abuse protocol.

Service Delivery

The Government of the Northwest Territories Income Security programs are administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Income Security Programs are delivered by **Client Service Officers** in five regions. Officers are not trained social workers or counsellors, they adjudicate benefit eligibility and entitlement on assistance and subsidy programs available through the Income Security Programs. The North Slave Region serves five communities. This service is delivered out of the Canada/NWT Service Centre in Yellowknife, located in the Greenstone Building.

Income Security Programs will:

- Provide immediate financial assistance to eligible families (women) leaving an abusive relationship. In this situation the income assistance decision will be made within the day or the next working day.
- Provide financial assistance to eligible, low-income families (women and children leaving an abusive relationship) so that they may obtain or maintain accommodations at current Yellowknife market or subsidized rates.
- Actively refer victims of family violence to shelters to address their emergency or transitional shelter needs (e.g. YWCA Alison McAteer House, YWCA

Transitional Housing, Salvation Army Emergency Shelter, Centre for Northern Families) where space is available, or to Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority if space is unavailable in a Yellowknife emergency shelter.

Operations

Service is available Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, no service at lunch (12:00 to 1:00). The office is closed weekends and statutory holidays. There is an Officer, appointed as Duty Officer, available daily to respond to clients who require emergency assistance. There is no emergency or after hours service.

Procedures

Intake/Screening/Assessment

Emergency Assistance

Income Security Programs recognize referrals from community agencies and individuals. If a person contacts, or is referred to Income Security Programs for emergency financial assistance, and abuse is identified, reception will notify the Manager and direct the call to the emergency Duty Officer who is on duty that day. Where abuse has been identified and emergency financial assistance is requested, attending the orientation session may be deferred.

If a client identifies they are being abused, the **Client Service Officers** will provide clients with a community resources card and refer the client to the appropriate support network.

Non-Emergency Assistance

New applicants must visit the Income Security Office to book an appointment for the mandatory income assistance orientation sessions, held every Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 pm. While booking the appointment for the orientation session, clients are supplied with an information package, which includes detailed lists of personal and financial documentation they must supply in order to qualify for income assistance.

After the orientation session, each client is given an appointment with a **Client Service Officer** to set up a file containing his or her personal and financial documentation. A second appointment is scheduled once a decision has been made on the eligibility and level of support the client will be receiving. Benefits are payable within 48 hours from approval. The **Client Service Officer** assesses eligibility for benefits based on the applicant's financial needs (assessment is set out in *Social Assistance Act, and Social Assistance Regulations*).

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

A client, entering their third month of assistance, may be required to participate in one or more productive choices. The **Client Service Officer** will provide more information on what this includes.

Intervention

In working with a victim of family violence and abuse, the **Client Service Officer** will be sensitive to client safety and her plans for leaving the relationship. The **Client Service Officer** shall determine under which conditions it is safe to talk to the victim, and when and where she can receive messages to ensure that messages will not be left with the partner or children.

If a client is still in the family home but planning to leave the relationship, an appointment can be made to:

- Complete an application, which can be processed after a new address is found.
- Share information and refer the client to other community supports including shelters, counselling services, victim support, and legal aid for custody of children. A community resources card with phone numbers and contacts will be offered.

Referrals

Based on the assessment of a client's needs, informal referrals are made by **Client Service Officers** for:

- Emergency food to the Salvation Army, or to the Yellowknife Food Bank.
- Emergency housing to the YWCA Alison McAteer House (women and children), Centre for Northern Families (women) and the Salvation Army (men only).
- Transitional housing to the YWCA Transitional Housing Program
- Longer-term housing to the Yellowknife Housing Authority.

Safety

The **Client Service Officer** plays an important role in the safety of the victim. The Officer recognizes that caution and sensitivity must be taken not to further jeopardize the client when contacting and setting up appointments with the client. Initially, the Officer will also not ask the client to gather information essential to eligibility, such as previous year's income tax assessment and proof of citizenship, mortgage/rental agreements, utility bills, bank statements, etc. However, this information may be required at a later date to continue eligibility.

Officer safety is of great importance to the agency. At the North Slave office, there is a zero tolerance policy that addresses verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, substance abuse and physical violence. If a client is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they are asked to return at another time. If they do not comply, the RCMP is called. A formal reception process restricts access to the Officer, and security doors that access to authorized personnel. Officers have panic buttons on their desks that, when activated, alert and summon co-workers to the scene and co-workers will contact RCMP if necessary.

Sharing Information

All information obtained from clients is considered personal and confidential. Clients must sign release forms to enable Income Security Programs to access information from other agencies or for other agencies to access Income Security Program client information.

Clients have the right to see their files and should contact the Manager for further information. It should also be noted that clients may be required to work through the Department's Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Coordinator to access their file(s).

Follow-up

Generally, clients are interviewed on a monthly basis to determine on-going eligibility and level of benefits based on monthly expenses, and progress on their productive choices' plan. Long-term income assistance clients with disabilities are interviewed less frequently, but must submit monthly income and expense documentation as required.

Training

As **Client Service Officers** adjudicate benefit eligibility and entitlement, training is directly related to the duties of the position. Training is not currently provided in social issues (e.g. family violence and abuse). Joint training that is offered through this Protocol will also be open to participation by **Client Service Officers**.

Appeal Process

- A client may appeal a decision made by the **Client Service Officer** within seven (7) days of receiving the decision. *The client may request assistance to complete the documents for this appeal from the **Client Service Officer**.*
- The file is reviewed by the Manager to ensure that the decision is consistent with the Income Security policies and practices.

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- The Manager may reverse the decision of the Officer, if an error in program administration is determined
- If the Manager agrees with the Officer's decision, an appeal committee hearing is scheduled and held within 30 days of receiving the appeal notice from the client.
- Should the committee uphold the decision of the Officer, the client can appeal to the Social Assistance Appeal Board within seven (7) days.
- In the case that the committee overturns the decision of the Officer, the Director of Income Security Programs may appeal to the Board within seven (7) days.
- The Board has 45 days to hear an appeal and prepare a decision.
- The decision of the Board is final. The client, on their own, may further apply for a judicial review through the courts. However, the client must pursue this review without assistance from the Income Security Program.

Linking With Other Agencies

Client Service Officers will offer to refer victims of family violence to community agencies such as:

- The RCMP, if the client's safety is at risk and a criminal investigation is warranted.
- YWCA Alison McAteer House for secure shelter and crisis intervention outreach, emotional support, advocacy, application for an Emergency Protection Order or other orders and referral for other community supports.
- Centre for Northern Families for emergency shelter for single and/or intoxicated women, emotional support and advocacy, and referral to other community supports.
- Stanton Territorial Health Authority for client assessment and treatment of physical injury, emotional and mental health.
- Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for mandatory reporting of child abuse, counselling support and advocacy.
- YWCA Transitional Housing for transitional housing
- Yellowknife Housing Authority for longer-term housing.
- Yellowknife Victim Services for support, information for Victim Impact Statement preparation and court support.

Informal organizational relationships guide referrals between Income Security Programs and the aforementioned partner agencies. Income Security Program referrals for emergency, transitional and long-term shelter, legal, emotional and counselling support, and advocacy form the basis for more formalized interagency protocols with these

agencies. Interagency protocols should address responsibilities of Income Security Programs and partner agencies in relation to family violence, for example:

- Procedures for communicating and exchanging information (e.g. sharing file information, reporting of criminal family violence incidents). ATIPP must be considered in all cases of information exchanges.
- Guidelines for requesting police assistance (e.g. staff/adult safety risk, child protection, abuse is criminal or suspected criminal act).
- Guidelines for liaison (e.g. participation in protocol partnership, updating colleagues in agency, advising of agency lead on cases, consultation as needed to establish that a criminal offence was committed and knowing when to involve the police).
- Participation in interagency training and meetings.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

Members as of December 2006

Name	Agency	Phone	Email	Mailing Address
Sgt. Ken Morrison	RCMP, "G" Division	669-5248	Ken.B.MORRISON@rcmp-grc.gc.ca	P.O. Bag 5000, Yellowknife NT X1A 2R3
Insp. Mike Payne	RCMP Yellowknife Detachment	873-7638 (f)873-0199	Mike_Payne@gov.nt.ca	Box 1320 Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
Emily Lawson	Yellowknife Victim Services	920-2978 (f)873-3152	victimservices@nativewomens.com	Box 2321 Yellowknife NT X1A 2P7
Diane Sylvain	Public Prosecution Service of Canada, NWT Regional Office	669-6917 (f)920-4022	diane.sylvain@dpp.gc.ca	C.P. Box 8 5020-48 th St., Yellowknife NT X1A 2N1
Lyda Fuller	YWCA of Yellowknife	920-2777 (f)873-9406	lydafuller@yellowknife.ywca.ca	Box 1679 Yellowknife NT X1A 2P3
Lisa Quinlan	YWCA Alison McAteer House	669-0235 (f) 669-0334	lisaquinlan@yellowknife.ywca.ca	Box 1679 Yellowknife NT X1A 2P3
Linda Heimbach	Stanton Territorial Health Authority Emergency Dept.	669-4100 (f) 669-4171	Linda_Heimbach@gov.nt.ca	Box 10 Yellowknife NT X1A 2N1
Jim White	Yellowknife Housing Authority	873-5694	jim_white@gov.nt.ca	Box 2197 Yellowknife NT X1A 2P6
Denise Lockhart	GNWT Health and Social Services	920-3000 (f)873-7706	Denise_Lockhart@gov.nt.ca	Box 1320 Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
Les Harrison	Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority	873-7901 (f)920-7025	Les_Harrison@gov.nt.ca	Box 608 Yellowknife NT X1A 2N5
Arlene Hache	Centre for Northern Families	873-2566 (f)873-2576	Arleneh10@hotmail.com	Box 2403 Yellowknife NT X1A 2P7
Rebecca Latour	GNWT Justice	920-3288 (f)873-0659	Rebecca_Latour@gov.nt.ca	Box 1320 Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
Vivian Gustafson	Income Security Programs, GNWT Education, Culture and Employment	920-3008 (f)873-0443	Vivian_Gustafson@gov.nt.ca	Box 1320 Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
Wendy McPherson	Canada/NWT Service Centre, GNWT Education, Culture and Employment	766-5100 (f)873-0423	Wendy_McPherson@gov.nt.ca	Box 1320 Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

APPENDIX B: EXISTING PROTOCOL AGREEMENTS AND MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

Yellowknife Victim Services – RCMP Draft Protocol

Purpose

1. For the month of April, RCMP will refer all victims of persons crimes to Victim Services Victims of residential break and enters will also be referred.

Informing Victims

2. Members will let victims know they are calling Victim Services for them. If the victim states that they do not want victim services, no referral is made. If the victim does not object or agrees, the referral is made. A victim can request to speak to Victim Services at another time.

Contacting Victim Services

3. Members can call Victim Services to be at the location prior to them completing their interactions with the victim and informing the victim of Victim Services if the situation is very serious or they are concerned the victim will leave if they have to wait. Victim Services will remain away from the victim until introduced and if the victim refuses contact, Victim Services will leave. Victim Services can go with RCMP to a next-of kin notification.
4. For immediate assistance by Victim Services, the member will call Communications and they will call Victim Services to attend. No referral form is required. Victim Services will arrive within 20 minutes within Yellowknife.
5. Follow up services by Victim Services the next day instead of at the time of the Incident may be requested in the following situations:
 - a) The victim is intoxicated
 - b) The only location available to speak to the victim is uncertain to be safe
 - c) The victim has said they do not want immediate service but are open to contact at a later time. A member can suggest this if it is very late at night and the victim does not appear significantly upset.

To request follow up support, members must complete referral forms and leave them in the Victim Services box at the detachment or call Victim Services to give information. A Victim Services card should be left with the victim as well. A referral form to Victim Services is required for follow up, even if the victim says they will call on their own.

Victim Services Contact with Victim

6. Victim Services initial contact with victims will be in the detachment. Hospital, public locations, and private locations when there are no ongoing safety concerns or the RCMP are still present. Preferably, in situations where the victim is in a private location, the RCMP will ask victims if they would come to the detachment to speak to Victim Services and if so Victim Services will be responsible for their transportation home. Victim Services could attend the scene while RCMP are present and take the victim to a safe location to talk if agreeable to the victim.
7. If Victim Services is coming to speak to a victim at the scene of an incident, the RCMP will remain on the scene to introduce Victim Services in situations when Victim Services can arrive within a few minutes. If members must leave the scene while Victim Services is en route, a request to Communications to inform Victim Services should be made.
8. If the victim is insistent on not leaving the location and the RCMP cannot ensure the location to be safe for Victim Services to attend without the RCMP, the members will leave a Victim Services card with the victim to follow up and the member will complete a Victim Services referral form and leave it in the Victim Services box at the detachment.
9. If there is no contact information available for a follow up referral, the RCMP will provide any limited information they have (e.g., shelter contact, family member). Victim Services will attempt to follow up.
10. In situations where there are no charges laid and there are uncertain allegations of an offence, the RCMP can still request the victim to speak to Victim Services. This will usually be a follow up referral if both parties are still in the same location. This referral is at the member's discretion if they feel the victim could benefit from support but no crime has been committed. If it is clear who the victim is but the victim is not making a statement, the referral should be made.

Follow up

11. After initial contact, Victim Services will continue to work with victims to provide follow up support and assist with any resultant court processes. If members completed referral forms, follow up information will be completed on those forms and left in the detachment for members' information. Without a referral form, members will have to request Victim Services for follow up information.

12. Any concerns throughout the month of April should be directed to the Victim Services Coordinator, 920-2978 or Sgt. Mike Brandford 669-5200.

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Justice Canada NWT Regional Office, Northern Region

and

The Department of Justice

Government of the Northwest Territories

March, 2005

DRAFT

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

History

In the Northwest Territories there has been an increase in recent years, in the number of Justice Canada Crown Witness Coordinators and GNWT funded Victim Services Programs. At this time (February 2005) there are 3 Crown Witness Coordinators, two (2) in Yellowknife and one (1) in Inuvik. There are also a total of six (6) full time staff employed by GNWT funded Victim Services Programs in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith and Fort Good Hope. Most of these GNWT funded Victim Services Programs also rely on a pool of volunteers. Furthermore, during a 2004/2005 *pilot project*, there are 3 fee-for-services Victim Services Support Workers employed in Rae/Edzo, Fort Providence and Fort McPherson.

In the last six (6) years, since 1999 there has been an increased demand for victim services in the NWT. The delivery of these services, however, is complicated by the vast geographic distances between communities and the lack of a road system to most communities. In addition, with eleven (11) official languages and a violent crime rate that is six (6) times the national average, there are significant challenges in assisting crime victims in the NWT.

Under these circumstances there is a compelling need to effectively manage and coordinate victim service delivery, with the goal of maximizing the availability and quality of these services to crime victims throughout the territory.

The objectives, therefore, of this Memorandum of Understanding revolve around the need to clarify the victim services offered by each level of government in an effort to find those areas where collaboration can be enhanced to the benefit of the victim and/or witness in question, and to identify these areas where duplication can be eliminated.

A further goal of this memorandum is to pinpoint those areas where there may be significant gaps in service, which might be at least partially ameliorated by increased partnership between federal and territorial victim services programs.

This memorandum, however, recognizes that each program has distinct mandates and follows the policies and protocols laid out by its respective level of government. In each MOU listed in this document the mandate of each government victim service is articulated. In general, these mandates can be stated as follows:

GNWT funded Victim Services Programs, and to a more limited extent Victim Services Support Workers, have a mandate to provide comprehensive emotional and practical support services to victims of crime and tragedy, whether or not *they* are involved in the criminal justice system

Justice Canada Crown Witness Coordinators have a mandate to support the Crown prosecution of criminal cases by assisting crime witnesses, who may be crime victims, through their involvement with the criminal justice system

Objectives

The objectives of this Memorandum of Understanding are:

- to articulate the service delivery protocol and procedures pertinent to

- assisting victims of crime and court witnesses in NWT
- to develop protocols and procedures reflective of the four (4) victim service delivery contexts in the NWT
- to enhance and encourage the coordination and collaboration of federal government and territorial government victim service delivery to crime victims in NWT
- to eliminate any areas where services to crime victims is unnecessarily duplicated
- to identify gaps in service and look for ways in which increased partnership between territorial and federal services might address these shortfalls

Memorandum # 1 will apply in those locations where there is a resident Crown Witness Coordinator (CWC) and a resident community based Victim Services Program (VSP worker) with staff and volunteers. This is the situation in Inuvik and Yellowknife.

4.1 General Statement of Roles Related to MOU # 1

The CWC role is to support Crown prosecution of criminal cases in Inuvik and Yellowknife.

The Victim Services Program (VSP worker) role is comprehensive support to victims of crime and tragedy in Inuvik and Yellowknife.

Both services adhere to the Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime 2003. (See Appendix A). Both services work in cooperation with each other, and other service providers, to ensure that the rights, responsibilities and needs of crime victims are addressed.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities Related to MOU #1. By Task:

4.2.1 TRAUMATIC EVENT

What service is delivered?

- Victims/witnesses emotional support and practical assistance, referral, information and assistance in accessing available resources at time of traumatic event

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker provides this service on an as needed basis

When is this service delivered?

- on an as needed basis

Details

- in person and phone support
- VSP worker provides materials related to the prosecution of crimes to victims/witnesses
- VSP worker informs victim/witnesses of their right to prepare a Victim Impact Statement in criminal proceedings
- VSP worker works with other community, regional and territorial resources to provide support to victims/ witnesses,

4.2.2 SUPPORT POST TRAUMATIC EVENT

What service is delivered?

- locating of victim
- ongoing support
- explanation of available services and victim's rights (Criminal Code,

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- Human Rights Act, Mental Health Act and other legislated rights)
 - information to victims/witnesses about any pending legal and/or judicial process
- Who delivers this service?
- VSP worker
 - CWC
 - Crown
- When is this service delivered?
- VSP worker on as needed basis after the initial trauma
 - CWC may provide some of this service, or refers to VSP worker, when victims are contacted first during Crown case preparation
- Details
- VSP worker provides support, short term problem solving, information, short term counselling
 - VSP worker keeps victims/witnesses informed about their situation if criminal proceedings are involved
 - VSP worker insures victims/witnesses know their rights and obligations
 - if victim contacts CWC first they remind victims of their right to complete a Victim Impact Statement and refer them to the VSP worker for assistance in this.
 - if police decide not to lay a charge, or if the Crown does not proceed with the charge, or the victim is unhappy with the police process, the VSP worker can:
 1. Explain what happened and make inquiries as to why, then explain why to the victim
 2. Bring this situation to the attention of the RCMP
 3. Bring this situation to the attention of the Crown
 4. Advise the victim of available resources if they are not satisfied with the explanation

4.2.3 BAIL HEARINGS OR BAIL REVIEW

- What service is delivered?
- Support to victims/witnesses, including explanation, of bail conditions
- Who delivers this service?
- VSP worker
 - CWC
- When is this service delivered?
- prior, during and after bail hearing
- Details
- CWC notifies victims/witnesses of bail hearing or bail review including date of hearings, if aware of this and available
 - If CWC or VSP worker available they may provide court accompaniment
 - Victims/witnesses wish changes to bail conditions they can pass on the request to the CWC and ask the victim to contact the Crown.
 - VSP worker and CWC coordinate the provision of information
 - VSP worker provides ongoing emotional support to the victim as required
 - VSP worker and CWC explain the outcome of bail hearing or bail review to victim in a coordinated fashion
 - VSP worker and CWC coordinate this support

4.2.4 JUSTICE SYSTEM PREPARATION

What service is delivered?

- locating of victim
- preparing victims/witnesses before First Appearance of the accused
- Victim Impact Statement;

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker
- CWC

When is this service delivered?

- before any dates are set for hearings

Details

- CWC reviews docket lists and makes plans for method and frequency of contact with victims/witnesses, CWC arranges appointments for victims/witnesses with Crown
- VSP worker and CWC ensure victims/witnesses have received court preparation information
- VSP worker and CWC keep victims/witnesses informed of the progress of the case
- VSP worker ensures victims/witnesses know their rights and obligations
- VSP worker assists in completion of VIS
- VSP worker and CWC Coordinate this support

4.2.5 FIRST APPEARANCE (ARRAIGNMENT)

What service is delivered?

- Crown and defense election
- in-court support

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker
- CWC.

When is this service delivered?

- prior to and at, First Appearance in court of accused

Details

- CWC provides in-court support
- VSP worker provides information, dates and court accompaniment if requested

4.2.6 COURT PREPARATION

What service is delivered?

- Preparation, support and information related to preliminary inquiry and trial
- information related to testifying in court
- determine if testimonial aides are needed

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Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker
- CWC

When is this service delivered?

- prior to and during preliminary hearing, trial

Details

- CWC provides notification of preliminary inquiry and information about the process.
- CWC present at meetings of victims/witnesses and Crown.
- CWC may interpret and will assist in court preparation
- CWC maintains contact after preliminary inquiry
- CWC provides information related to the specific case of the victims /witnesses, and reviews their RCMP statement with them.
- CWC informs victims/witnesses re their role providing testimony in court
- VSP worker and CWC assess if testimonial aides *are* necessary and may ask Crown to apply to the court for their provision.
- VSP worker provides information and support if requested
- VSP worker and CWC coordinate this support

4.2.7 VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

What service is delivered?

- preparation of Victim Impact Statement

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker

When is this service delivered?

- prior to sentencing

Details

- VSP worker assists victims/witnesses to write VIS in their own words and ensures it is delivered to proper authorities
- VSP worker assists in updating VIS

4.2.8 PRELIMINARY INQUIRY AND TRIAL SUPPORT

What service is delivered?

- In-court support during preliminary inquiry, trial and testimony stage of court case

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker
- CWC

When is this service delivered?

- during preliminary inquiry and trial

Details

- CWC provides notification of preliminary inquiry, trial and information about the process
- CWC present at meeting of victim and Crown
- CWC may interpret and will assist in court preparation in person or by phone
- CWC maintains contact after preliminary inquiry, and refers victim to VSP worker for VIS
- CWC provides information related to the specific case of the victim/witness
- CWC informs victims/witnesses in their role providing testimony in court
- VSP worker provides support *re* emotional and practical concerns and
- VSP worker and CWC provide court accompaniment if agreed by victim and/or Crown
- VSP worker and CWC co-ordinate this support

4.2.9 VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

What service is delivered?

- preparation of Victim Impact Statement

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker

When is this service delivered?

- prior to sentencing

Details

- VSP worker assists victims/witnesses to write VIS in their own words and ensures it is delivered to proper authorities.
- VSP worker assists in updating VIS

4.2.10 SENTENCING

What service is delivered?

- sentencing hearing, preceded by guilty plea or after the trial\
- court accompaniment

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker
- CWC

When is this service delivered?

- during sentencing hearings

Details

- VSP worker and CWC, if requested, support victims who choose to read Victim Impact Statement by providing court accompaniment
- CWC or VSP worker may ask Crown about an adjournment to

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- prepare VIS
- CWC and VSP worker assists in informing victims/witnesses about the court's final decision

4.2.11 MENTAL DISORDER VERDICT PROCEEDINGS

What service is delivered?

- the matter is referred to the Mental Disorder Review Board of the NWT

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker
- CWC

When is this service delivered?

- as needed basis

Details

- VSP worker and/or CWC explain this process and offer support as per other proceedings and hearings described above

4.2.12 POSTTRIAL SUPPORT

What service is delivered?

- emotional and practical support to victims/witnesses after the trial and sentencing

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker
- CWC

When is this service delivered?

- after the trial and sentencing
- VSP worker provides support re ongoing emotional and practical concerns
- CWC and VSP worker provide ongoing case information and advise victims of procedures to access information about offenders after sentence (CSC registry)
- VSP worker and CWC co-ordinate this support

4.2.13 PROBATION CONDITIONS *and/or* RESTITUTION

What service is delivered?

- restitution enforcement
- ongoing support

Who delivers this service?

- VSP worker
- CWC

When is this service delivered?

- as needed basis

Details

- VSP worker refers the victim(s) to Court Services to complete package to convert restitution order to civil order (possibly assisting them with the forms)
- CWC *or* probation officer explains probation conditions

4.2.14 APPEALS

What service is delivered?

- explanation of process and notification of appeal hearings

APPENDIX C: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/>

CRN Toolkit > Resources > Provincial Community Response Network
http://www.bccrns.ca/resources/crn_toolkit/index.php

Resource and Training Kit for Service Providers,(NCFV), Public Health Agency of Canada
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/html/agekit_e.html

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APPENDIX D: BEST PRACTICE TOOLS AND YELLOWKNIFE INTERAGENCY RESPONSE CHART

DANGER ASSESSMENT¹³

Several risk factors have been associated with homicides (murders) of both batterers and battered women in research conducted after the murders have taken place. We cannot predict what will happen in your case, but we would like you to be aware of the danger of homicide in situations of severe battering and for you to see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation.

Mark **Yes** or **No** for each of the following. ("He" refers to your husband, partner, exhusband, ex-partner, or whoever is currently physically hurting you.)

- ___ 1. Has the physical violence increased in severity or frequency over the past year?
- ___ 2. Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
- ___ 3. Does he ever try to choke you?
- ___ 4. Does he own a gun?
- ___ 5. Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to do so?
- ___ 6. Does he use drugs? By drugs, I mean "uppers" or amphetamines, speed, angel dust, cocaine, "crack", street drugs or mixtures.
- ___ 7. Does he threaten to kill you and/or do you believe he is capable of killing you?
- ___ 8. Is he drunk every day or almost every day? (In terms of quantity of alcohol.)
- ___ 9. Does he control most or all of your daily activities? For instance: does he tell you who you can be friends with, when you can see your family, how much money you can use, or when you can take the car? (If he tries, but you do not let him, check here: ___)
- ___ 10. Have you ever been beaten by him while you were pregnant? (If you have never been pregnant by him, check here: ___)
- ___ 11. Is he violently and constantly jealous of you? (For instance, does he say "If I can't have you, no one can.")
- ___ 12. Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?

¹³ Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Ph.D., R.N. 1985, 1988, 2001 *Danger Assessment*

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- ___ 13. Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
- ___ 14. Does he threaten to harm your children? (If you have no children, check here:___)
- ___ 15. Do you have a child that is not his?
- ___ 16. Is he unemployed?
- ___ 17. Have you left him during the past year? (If have *never* lived with him, check here:___)
- ___ 18. Do you currently have another (different) intimate partner?
- ___ 19. Does he follow or spy on you? Leave threatening notes, destroy your property, or call you when you don't want him to?

See attached scoring instructions.

Client may need extra support and debriefing after completing this tool.

Staff_____

Date_____

Danger Assessment Scoring Instructions

All items should be scored:

Yes =1

No=0

Except:

#2=4

#4=5.5

#5=2

#7=3

#9=2

#15=2.5

#16=4.5

#17=3.5 or if client never lived with partner #17=.5.

If #9 and #17 = yes, add 5.5 to total score.

Total score of 18 or more represents severe risk. Highest possible is 45.

This is a tool only.

A lower score does not mean a woman is “safe” with no risk or even low risk.

* Client may need extra support and debriefing after completing this tool.

A safety planning tool “Creating a Safety Plan” is available on the GNWT Health and Social Services Family Violence website.

http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/Features/Programs_and_Services/famviol/pdf/creatingsafetyplanapr2005.pdf

Yellowknife Interagency Protocol

Referral Slip

Referral from: _____

Referral to: _____

Location of meeting: _____

Person to meet with: _____

Date/time: _____

How to get there: _____

Phone number to call if this meeting needs to be changed: _____

Referral Slip

Referral from: _____

Referral to: _____

Location of meeting: _____

Person to meet with: _____

Date/time: _____

How to get there: _____

Phone number to call if this meeting needs to be changed: _____

SAFE Screening Tool for Intimate Partner Violence

Screening does not have to involve a long list of questions that may be inappropriate or difficult to use in some situations. The SAFE tool is designed to be memorized easily and used quickly:

S: How would she describe her Spousal/intimate relationship?

A: What happens when she and her partner Argue?

F: Do Fights result in her being hit, shoved or hurt?

E: Does she have an Emergency plan?

** Created by the Lakeshore Area Multi-Service Project (LAMP) and Woman's Habitat with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health.

The exact wording of the questions is not important as long as there are questions asked that elicit the same information, in the same order as presented. This tool can be easily worked into a general conversation with women under the guise of getting a medical or social history. If there is no abuse or concerning behavior disclosed during the first three questions, there is no need to ask the final question. **It is important to never ask these questions in the presence of the woman's partner.**

It might be necessary to use this tool with the same woman on more than one occasion, before she discloses abuse. If you suspect abuse is present, but the woman does not trust you enough to disclose, it is important to let them know that you are there for them whenever they are ready to talk.

Yellowknife Interagency Response Chart

The Response Adult Victims of Family Violence in Yellowknife Can Expect from Service Providers

