

Coalition Against Family Violence

Recommendations for addressing gaps, shifting attitudes, and enhancing services to reduce family violence and abuse in the NWT

Final Report March 31, 2011

Introduction

The Coalition Against Family Violence is made up of the following non-government and government agencies:

Native Women's Association of the NWT (co-Chair)	GNWT, Executive - Women's Advisory
Status of Women Council of the NWT (co-Chair)	NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities
	NWT Housing Corporation
Aimayunga Women & Emergency Foster Care Shelter	NWT John Howard Society
Aurora College	NWT Seniors' Society
Centre for Northern Families	Northern Territories Federation of Labour
City of Yellowknife	RCMP
Inuvik Translational Home	Salvation Army
Family Support Centre, Hay River	Sutherland House
GNWT, Department of Justice	Victim Services
GNWT, Department of Health and Social Services	YWCA of Yellowknife

To date, this Coalition has made great strides to shift attitudes and enhance services to reduce family violence and abuse. In 2003, an initial Framework for Action: *A Call to Action to the GNWT*, was submitted by the Coalition, and since that time the Coalition has been working in close partnership with the GNWT to implement two Actions Plans that consist of actions that have had a direct impact on family violence in the NWT. Through various sub-committees, various Coalition members have also been active in the monitoring and implementation of specific activities in the Action Plans.

With the NWT Family Violence Acton Plan Phase II coming to an end on March 31, 2012, the Coalition has taken the time to reflect on the progress made to date and identify 19 recommendations for continuous improvement; three of which, the Coalition is seeking core-funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) that will allow for enhanced services to continue on an ongoing basis.

This document presents all 19 recommendations, which taken together, represent critical actions that will help us toward our goal of addressing gaps, shifting attitudes, and enhancing services in the area of family violence and abuse. The GNWT and other funding agencies are urged to recognize these recommendations as critical initiatives needed in a Phase III Action Plan. When reviewing the recommendations, the Coalition would like to emphasize that family violence and abuse are multigenerational; impacting residents from infancy to senior ages, and that all violence is not confined within family parameters.

The document first describes the progress that has been made to date; the methodology that was undertaken to reach the recommendations identified herein, and then the recommendations with strategies, rationale, and timelines (where applicable) are presented, followed by a plan of action for distributing this document.

Progress to date

Much work has been accomplished through the Coalition Against Family Violence over the past five years with the major activities that have been undertaken through Phase II (2007-2012), including the following:

1. The 2007 Family Violence Survey (territorial attitude survey) has been completed and released
2. A Territorial family violence consultation was held (November 2007) to present information on best practices and to gain feedback from community members
3. Supporting Northern Women – A Northwest Territories Shelter Worker Training Manual was developed along with an accompanying facilitator’s manual
4. The existing family violence shelters outside of Yellowknife have received increased funding to stabilize services
5. A review of the Inuvik Transition House was conducted in 2008-2009
6. Services have been enhanced for community based outreach, advocacy and prevention in the three regions without shelters (Tlicho, Dehcho and Sahtu)
7. Protocol development has been supported in Yellowknife and in the Sahtu and includes the implementation of a common risk assessment tool: the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment across the NWT
8. YWCA’s Child Recovery program for children who witness abuse has been stabilized and expanded
9. A framework and curriculum have been developed based on best practice research for a program for men who use violence. It is anticipated that a strength based program for men will be ready to pilot by September, 2011
10. As part of the research for the program for men, *Non-Violence: A Strength Based Community Inquiry* video was developed. This video is a collection of northern men’s personal experiences of non-violence, compassion, strength and human potential and was used to inform the development of a 20 week strength-based program for men who use violence.

11. Evaluation of the first five years of the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* is currently underway and will be completed by March 31, 2011.

In attempts to further reduce the impact of family violence and abuse in the NWT, the Coalition members have also undertaken individual activities within their own organizations that were leveraged through other means to support the Phase II work. A selection of these activities¹ includes:

- Development of clear Shelter Policy and Procedures
- Establishment of a collaborative Pan-Territorial Shelter Network that has linkages to the newly established Canadian Shelter Network
- Built networks for the Elder Abuse Prevention Project, which resulted in research, a symposium, and a depository of information about elder abuse
- Accessed funding from Federal Government and Foundation Agencies
- Increased safety for women in communities without RCMP, through community development work and building strengths and capacity among women
- Implemented Family Violence Awareness Week activities since 1999, yearly themes vary -2010 theme focused on elders- five communities were granted funds to implement activities in their communities
- Launch of a Pan-Territorial campaign addressing financial abuse
- Victims of Crime Emergency Fund

Taken together, the work achieved through the Phase II Action Plan as well as the work undertaken by individual Coalition members has made great strides to increase the awareness and prevention of family violence and abuse across the NWT. However, efforts need to continue to reduce the impacts of violence and abuse; efforts which require a balance of continuing the progress made to date as well as implementing new actions.

Through discussions during regular Coalition meetings, members have been able to learn first-hand which initiatives are having great impact, and which initiatives require additional resources. One of the key recommendations identified in our recent meetings was to seek approval from the GNWT to provide core funding to stabilize those services which were funded in the past year, and which have proven to have great impact in the area of family violence and abuse.

¹ Please note that the list presented here is not an exhaustive list.

A second outcome of our discussions was to recommend a list of actions for an Action Plan III that will incorporate relevant actions from the second Action Plan as well as other actions that are felt to be critical to the ongoing commitment of addressing gaps, changing attitudes, and enhancing services to reduce family violence and abuse in the NWT. To ensure progress is being made toward these recommendations, it will be important for the Coalition to assign sub-committees to each priority area, and to the extent possible, include community voices in each of the initiatives identified. These recommendations - how they were developed, and what strategies are required - are the focus of the remainder of this report.

Methodology

The following two steps represent the methodology that was undertaken in reaching these recommendations moving forward:

- Step 1: Planning meeting in February 2010 that highlighted progress made in the Phase II Action Plan and identified some potential areas for action moving forward
- Step 2: Two working meetings in February 2011 to identify the recommendations and associated rationale presented in this document. In these meetings, the actions were presented in three stages:
1. The 2010-2011 actions whose funding sunsets in March 31, 2012 with the end of the Phase II Action Plan
 2. Actions that did not receive funding in the Phase II Action Plan
 3. Other actions that resulted from either the February 2010 or 2011 meetings.

The recommendations that are presented in the tables on the next pages identify actions within respective themes, the strategies that are required to implement them, and the rationale for making it a recommendation for a Phase III Action Plan. Please note that where a percentage of survey respondents is included in the rationale, it is referencing the percentage of the 28,856 NWT residents aged 19 and over that responded to the 2007 Family Violence Survey.

Recommended Plan of Action

Actions Recommended for Core Funding starting April 01, 2012

Priority Area	Action	Strategies	Rationale
Enhancing Services	Stabilize Existing Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding to the four family violence shelters outside of Yellowknife cover actual O&M costs and cover staffing costs • Provide funding for an on-going training program and support to shelter workers that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immediate/best practice crisis intervention and support - Easily accessed format through different mediums • Continue shelter network meetings at least quarterly • Continued implementation of the Shelter Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 92% of survey respondents identified that more shelters for victims of family violence is one way of dealing with family violence at the community level • 88% of survey respondents were very worried or somewhat worried about family violence in their community • Action Plan Phase II funding ends March 31, 2012 • Current funding levels provided to shelters do not address the need • Funding has allowed for stabilized shelter services, enhanced capacity and outreach • Shelter staff identify that their shelters would not be open if not for the funding • A Response-based training curriculum for shelter workers and advocates was developed, but not funding exists to implement training • Consistent service delivery across all shelters
	Enhancing Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for outreach, advocacy, and prevention programming in the non-shelter regions • Support for programming for Children Who Witness Abuse • Protocol development and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 92% of survey respondents identified that more shelters for victims of family violence is one way of dealing with family violence at the community level • 88% of survey respondents were very worried or somewhat worried about family violence in their community • Action Plan Phase II funding ends March 31, 2012 • Non-shelter regions can provide their communities options that they can choose from based on their needs
	Program for Men who use violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for a three year community-based pilot program • Hire experienced contractors to implement the program • Establish a Board that will ensure transparency and accountability within the program • Provide funding for evaluation design and implementation of the 3-year pilot • Adjust program based on evaluation results and incorporate into mainstream programming with core funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91% of survey respondents identified that better treatment for offenders is one way of dealing with family violence at the community level • Action Plan Phase II funding ends March 31, 2012 • Anticipated Federal funding no longer exists for implementation • Valuable resources and time have been used to develop the program

Actions Recommended for Phase III Action Plan starting April 01, 2012

Priority Area	Action	Strategies	Timeline	Rationale
Enhancing Services	Resurrect Trauma Recovery Program for Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate program into mainstream programming within Yellowknife based on evaluation results Pilot programming across other NWT communities based on evaluation results 	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot program was successful and based on NWT research of women's needs The trauma-based program mitigates the impacts and perpetuation of violence and abuse Implementation of the program would coincide with the implementation of the Program for Men
	Support the provision of safe homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore feasibility of safe home networks Work with communities to identify and/or build safe homes 	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% of survey respondents were very worried or somewhat worried about family violence in their community Provides a short term solution for victims of violence and abuse
	Improve community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Death Review panel Work with the NWT Association of Communities to improve community safety Work with the NWT housing Corporation to increase housing stock in communities for victims to access 	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% of survey respondents were very worried or somewhat worried about family violence in their community Community safety would be enhanced by implementing these strategies
Prevention	Develop primary prevention strategies for children and youth from their perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring children and youth together to identify prevention strategies that would work Conduct a literature review that would identify best practice prevention strategies for children and youth Develop and implement prevention strategies based on consultation and literature review 	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 47% of survey respondents identified that children under 12 were most at risk for family violence At the 2007 Territorial Family Violence Conference, youth identified that they needed programming to be directed towards them, and had various ideas on how family violence could be prevented Schools have limited curriculum content around the area of family violence and abuse
	Implement a holistic Family Support Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the scope of a Model that focuses on individual and family goals and mediating family relations around them (including all family members) Develop and implement a model based on the defined scope 	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next to the RCMP and a friend, family was the third highest response provided by survey respondents when asked who they would first go to for help if they were a victim of family violence Various programs are identified as successful best practices, to include the Islands of Safety program
Policy and Legislation	Establish mechanisms to centrally house data collection to all things family violence and abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and document who currently collects information and how that information is collected Develop information sharing protocols and common intake and assessment frameworks for data collection purposes, with the goal to collect information in a consistent way 	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readily accessible, up-to-date information

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Priority Area	Action	Strategies	Timeline	Rationale
Policy and Legislation (continued)	To remove barriers that prevent victims from escaping family violence and abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine policies , procedures, and practices related to housing, income support, and child welfare Apply a culturally-relevant gender-based lens to housing and income support 	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative changes will hold agencies accountable for removing barriers that prevent victims from escaping family violence and abuse
	Adult Protection Legislation for Vulnerable Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Best Practice research Examine suitability of older adult protection legislation for the NWT Legislation based on Best Practices Develop appropriate education materials and support networks (Moved) 	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable adults and specifically older adults and persons with disabilities are not adequately being addressed across the family violence and abuse continuum
	Implement the recommendations of the Protection Against Family Violence Act evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Justice to work with the stakeholders of the Protection Against Family Violence Act to develop an Action Plan to address the recommendations and associated data limitations 	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCMP (who area designate under the Act) was the highest response provided by survey respondents when asked who they would first go to if they were a victim of family violence In-depth evaluation will be completed March 31, 2011 and results will help define what successes need to continue and which challenges need to be addressed Addressing the evaluation results will aid in continuous improvement of the Act to better meet the needs of victims of family violence and abuse
Education and Awareness	Targeted and sustained education and awareness campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a targeted and sustained education and awareness campaign that builds from the 2007 Family Violence Survey results and incorporates people’s voices 	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a critical need to build on the 2007/2008 baseline, especially related to shifting attitudes A shift in attitudes (from the baseline) can only happen over time if proper resources are dedicated to a targeted and sustained campaign
	Deliver promotion and training activities related to legal remedies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of the Family Law Manual Information and legal training should be provided to the public through the Law Society, Aurora college, and/or Court Workers Train shelter workers, victim service workers, and court workers about the Family Justice System Reinstate the community-based delivery of the Law Line and Arctic PLEA services 	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These services would increase the level of awareness and understanding of legal rights available to NWT residents affected by family violence and abuse The Family Law manual has been distributed but no funding has been dedicated to promote the use of the Manual Shelter workers, victim service workers, and court workers can better assist victims through the legal and criminal law systems

Priority Area	Action	Strategies	Timeline	Rationale
Education and awareness (continued)	Broaden education to front line workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop appropriate education materials and support networks • Establish networking opportunities and venues for learning about family violence and abuse services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public information sessions helping those in need of services - Protocol training to Agencies outside of Yellowknife 	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These services would increase the level of awareness and understanding of programs and services available to NWT residents affected by family violence and abuse
	Evaluation of Family Violence programming and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an attitudinal survey in 2017 • Using the results, examine through evaluation the extent to which the family violence and abuse programming/services and targeted campaign have influenced the results of the attitudinal survey • Report survey and evaluation results back to the public 	5 + years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An evaluation incorporating results of a second attitudinal survey will be necessary to examine the extent to which the Coalition's actions are able to address gaps, shift attitudes, and enhance services related to the area of family violence and abuse
Training	Implement Gender-Equality training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the profile of gender-based analysis across the NWT • Implement Gender-Equality workshops across the NWT, to include an open-door policy to non-GNWT members when training is offered across the GNWT 	5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Equality policy was passed in the GNWT in 1988 with limited change to power dynamics • Some training has been undertaken to date and has helped to progress toward shifting attitudes in the area of family violence
Partnerships and Coordination	Recruit and establish community and regional Representation on the Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit community and regional representation on the Coalition, in the least, establishing consistent representation from the following organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Northwest Territories Association of Communities - Youth groups and/or Youth Centres - Education, Culture and Employment - Health Promotion - Stanton Territorial Health Authority - NWT Housing Corporation - Established partnerships to support interagency groups across the NWT - RCMP • Examine and adjust the Terms of Reference based on the recruitment and establishment of an expanded membership and regional co-chair position • Schedule at least one face-to-face Coalition meeting per year, inclusive of the Regional co-Chair • Develop an Action Plan and Communications Plan for Coalition activities • Utilize government technology to engage with established interagency groups across the NWT 	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the Coalition will be critical for it to develop innovative solutions to address family violence and abuse at the community and regional levels • Networking at the community and regional levels would increase as a result of an expanded membership on the Coalition • Education and awareness about family violence and abuse would increase across the NWT if it was represented by regional interests

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Priority Area	Action	Strategies	Timeline	Rationale
Partnerships and Coordination (continued)	Establish a RCMP Family Violence and Abuse Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCMP to dedicate a unit to family violence and abuse, which includes a social worker position RCMP commits to become a representative on the Coalition 	3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCMP was the highest response provided by survey respondents when asked who they would first go to if they were a victim of family violence Survey respondents reported the most effective way for dealing with family violence is through more serious penalties for offenders The RCMP does not have a dedicated position to address family violence and abuse in the NWT; rather staff persons are assigned this role in addition to their other duties and turnover in these positions is concerning and does not provide the consistency and commitment that is needed for this issue

Plan of Action

The Coalition Against Family Violence is a territorial interagency group that brings together individuals, non-government and government agencies to share information and update projects in keeping with the mandate. As a collaborative, we have a strong voice and bring a vast amount of expertise and experience to the table. Therefore, if gaps are going to be addressed, attitudes shifted, and services enhanced, it is imperative that all the recommendations listed above garner a response from government and non government funding agencies before the Phase II funding sunsets in March 2012.

In order to raise the profile of these recommendations, we commit to distributing this document to the Building Our Futures Strategic Committee, individual MLAs, Deputy Ministers, general public, and the media. It is our hope that through this distribution, the need to address family violence and abuse and provide appropriate funding and resources to the recommendation listed above to ensure family violence and abuse remains a priority in the NWT beyond the Phase II Action Plan. Successes to this end will be evident in the results of a second attitudinal survey and evaluation results.