

Association
of
Men's Intervention
Programs

Submission to
Department of Community Services

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INTRODUCTION

The Association of Men's Intervention Programs (AMIP) is a coalition of Nova Scotia's six funded men's intervention programs (funded through the Department of Community Services.). Although the six funded men's intervention programs have met often over the years to exchange programming information in a search for best practices, to share techniques and discuss shared challenges, as well as to meet with the Department of Community Services, they maintained a fairly informal relationship. However, shortly after the provincial budget was announced on April 4, 2002, it became clear that the effective survival of our programming could only come about if we worked more closely together and with our Coalition partners - the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia member organizations with whom we share a common commitment of working on the elimination of family violence and Nova Scotia's Women's Centres with whom we share a strong desire to improve the quality of life for women and families in our communities.

Although this initiative came about largely in the form of a funding crisis, as an Association, we have welcomed this opportunity to work with the Department of Community Services to look at how programming for abusive men can be enhanced and strengthened. There can be no eradication of the problem of family violence without sincere respect for the knowledge and expertise of those who work closely enough to understand the complexity of the problems and related factors within our communities.

MEN'S INTERVENTION PROGRAMS IN NOVA SCOTIA

There are six funded¹ men's intervention programs in Nova Scotia - **New Start** in Halifax, **Alternatives** in Bridgewater, **Bridges** in Truro, **New Directions** in Amherst, **New Leaf** in New Glasgow, and **Second Chance** in Sydney. In addition, we have always enjoyed a close working relationship with the men's programs offered by the **Mi'kmaq Family Healing Centres**.

Programs are quite diverse in approach and outlook. Each of our programs arose out of community demand and has been driven by defined community needs. Each program is accountable to its community through volunteer boards of directors recruited from within the community and each program remains responsive to community dynamics. Out of that diversity comes strength, however, all programs follow our provincial Standards of Practice, use a feminist philosophy and approach, and share the common objectives of women's equality and safety by ending violence against women and addressing the effects of abuse within intimate relationships.

¹ Funded by the Department of Community Services

We have also worked closely with the Department of Community Services over the years, usually meeting quarterly with the Director of Outreach Services. Our last major undertaking involved the development of our Standards of Practice. These standards were developed throughout the 1990s and submitted to the Department of Community Services in 2001. We have also jointly entered into a series of "Discussion Days" to examine changes in professional practices and how these would impact both the men's programs and the broader community.

Reflected in our Standards of Practice and as determined by community needs, our programs offer a set of core services as well as some community-defined additional or complementary programming. Most programs have found it difficult to explore new programming options, even in the face of clear community need, because of under-funding.

CORE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

The Standards of Practice adopted by our Men's Intervention Programs clearly sets out the core services offered in our communities.

Services for Men (who have been abusive)

- Group counselling
- Individual counselling and support services
- Suitability assessments and interviews
- Case conferencing
- Referrals and information

Services for Women (Partners)

- Safety planning
- Demystification of men's programming
- Group and individual counselling
- Partner contacts/safety checks
- Advocacy and support services
- Information and referral

Community Programming

- ✓ Community education and awareness
- ✓ Advocacy on the issues
- ✓ Multi-Agency coordination and linkages
- ✓ Supervision of students (NSCC, BSW, MSW, Atlantic School of Theology...)
- ✓ Training for professional staff (i.e. Probations/CAS/Department of Justice, Police...)

Additional/Complementary Services

- **New Start** has studied and collaborated with research and programming options regarding parent abuse in local and national First Nations, Black and Immigrant communities.
- Research and Publishing on issue of men using abuse against women
- School programs (**New Leaf**) with Tearmann House
- Parenting with Purpose (**New Leaf**), a ten week program for male parents focusing on effect of conflict on children, their developmental needs and appropriate responses

OUR PROGRAMS

With one full-time mens worker/program coordinator (35 hours/week) and one half-time women's worker (22 hours/week), **Alternatives** is located in Bridgewater and provides satellite service to Liverpool every other Thursday through Probations. Clients come from Lunenburg and Queens Counties. Usually more than half of the men coming to the program come through community referrals rather than Probation. The one men's worker offers four open groups as well as individual counselling services. This is the only funded program within the Western Region of Nova Scotia which has a population base of over 234,000 and a geographic area of 19,000 square kilometers.

Bridges principally offers services to the residents of Colchester and East Hants Counties. These counties encompass an area of approximately 4,800 square kilometers with a population of approximately 72,000. This program has one full time men's counsellor who also acts as program coordinator and handles all administrative work in addition to his group work and individual counselling demands. The Women's Component is delivered by one part-time women's counsellor who works 18 hours a week.

New Directions largely serves clients from Cumberland County although the lack of transportation means that clients from the farthest parts of the county may not be able to fully access services. The County has a population of approximately 34,000 and a geographic base of 4,288 square kilometers. The rural population is widely dispersed throughout the county. There are two full time men's support counsellors providing group counselling twice a week. Although the Women's Component is largely served by the transition house staff, the program's counsellors see women to do partner contacts and to provide them with program information and safety planning. Contact with partners is maintained as long as men are in the program. **New Directions** is one of the only men's intervention programs in North America located within a transition house (Autumn House). This unique model arose directly out of community needs at the time the transition house (which provides shelter within a largely outreach based model) was opened. The program is considered an integral part of the programming of the transition house from which it was created.

New Leaf is a community based anti-violence program that works with men who are or have been abusive towards their intimate partners (or ex-partners) and/or their children. Founded 17 years ago, **New Leaf** is one of the oldest men's intervention programs in Canada. The program serves Pictou County, Antigonish County, Guysborough County as well as parts of Richmond and Inverness Counties (as far as Mabou) in Cape Breton. This is a largely rural population with an average of 6.4 people per square kilometer. New Glasgow, where the service is located, has a population of 9,432. Clients may have to drive 2+ hours to attend weekly sessions. There are three open groups each week offered by 2 full time Men's Counsellors.

In addition to offering support for men to change their abusive behaviours, **New Leaf** also offers a Women's Component (via a contract with Tearmann House, 10 hours a week), a parenting program and a school-based program for Grades 7-12. **New Leaf** is an integral part of its community's coordinated response to violence against women.

New Start largely serves an urban population although 20% of its clients are from the rural areas of the Halifax Regional Municipality. This municipality has a total population of over 350,000 which is almost 40% of the province's total population. This population is contained within a geographic area of 5,490 square kilometers. 10% of **New Start** clients are New Canadians or Immigrants and 20% are representative of visible minorities. 70% of **New Start** clients are ordered to the program via the courts with an increasing percentage of referrals coming from child protection services. **New Start** is the only men's program within this extremely large municipality.

Second Chance serves Cape Breton Island as its catchment area. **Second Chance** uses a combination of therapeutic and educational processes which are interwoven to engage and guide males who abuse through an exploration of the beliefs and attitudes behind their abusive behaviour, and through alternative beliefs and skills to help them change. Group discussion is facilitated on various related issues to address both common and unique circumstances among the men present. The staff strive to avoid duplication of oppressive tendencies through an engagement process that is sincere, respectful and conscientious, and with understanding of the discomfort of self-disclosure, exploration and change. The program covers a geographic area of 2,471 square kilometers with a population base of 109,300 as of 2001. 86% of the program referrals are from the Cape Breton Regional Municipality with 14% from the more distant and/or rural areas of Cape Breton Island. The program has one full time program coordinator/men's counsellor, one Women's Component worker (12 hours a week) and one part-time office assistant (8 hours a week).

WHO DO THE MEN'S PROGRAMS SERVE?

- **Men**

- ♂ Men who have used abusive behaviours in their intimate relationships
- ♂ Ages range from 14 to 90, although the average age typically is mid-adulthood (i.e for **New Start** the mean is 35.)
- ♂ Men may be referred through the Criminal Justice System, through Family & Children's Services/Children's Aid, Mental Health, Department of Community Services, other community referral sources, or are self-referred.
- ♂ It should not be assumed that men's programs only work with men with low income levels, however, most programs do find that there is a high degree of marginalization present among referrals. **New Start** estimates that 50% of its clients are

marginalized and subsisting on social assistance. Similarly, **Alternatives** and **New Directions** note that many of the men who attend their programs are economically marginalized through poverty, poor education, or low literacy levels. **Second Chance**, however, although it has a high percentage of clients with low socioeconomic status, has a low proportion of clients from other marginalized populations. This program has a high percentage of clients come from within the working class and a high percentage on Canada Pension Disability.

- ♂ **New Directions** and **New Leaf** also note that seasonal and shift work is common with male clients, with all the additional complications this brings to programming.
- ♂ Many clients for all the programs also have substance abuse problems and many are actively combating substance abuse.
- ♂ As is consistent in the research, many of our clients are experiencing low self-esteem or low self-value and as noted by **Alternatives**, many of the men we assist lack a community of support for change.
- ♂ **Bridges** also notes that most of their male clients have been influenced strongly by dominant gender stories.

- **Women (Partners/Ex-partners)**

- ♀ The Women's Component for each program works with the partners and ex-partners of men using their program
- ♀ These women are very similar in demographic detail as the women who typically use shelter services, although a large proportion of these partners have chosen to not work through their local transition house. The Women's Component for **Alternatives**, notes that up to 70% of the women served by that program have chosen no contact with the local shelter, perhaps because they are staying within the relationship.

- **Families**

- ▶ Clearly, intimate partner abuse or abuse within a family affects all members of that family. All men's programs largely provide indirect services and some limited direct services to all members of the family unit.
- ▶ In most cases, for each man involved in the program, there is more than one family receiving indirect services, because many male clients have had relationships with more than one woman over time.
- ▶ All men's programs address parenting issues with their male clients

- **Teens**

- ◆ Several programs offer specific programs for teens, typically through the school system. This often includes public education programs within junior high and high schools.
- ◆ Most programs have occasional referrals or requests for service from teens. Typically teens are identified for services by the courts, restorative justice programs, parents, schools, or other significant women in their lives.
- ◆ **New Leaf** has an extensive program for adolescent males as a part of joint programming in the schools (Grades 7-12) with Tearmann House.

Trends

Given the client diversity revealed in these profiles, it is not surprising that our programs recognize the need for broader and more comprehensive community based services. Meeting the needs of such a diverse clientele would tax programs with considerably greater resources than are currently available.

OUR ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY - LINKAGES

1. Who Do We Work With?

A partial list of common community linkages for each program includes:

* Mental Health * Addiction Services * Recovery House * Salvation Army * Help Line *
* Family & Children's Services * Children's Aid * Coverdale Court Work * Elizabeth Fry
Society * John Howard Society * RCMP and Municipal Policing Units * Domestic
Violence Coordinators * Probation * Parole Board * Community-based Service Clubs *
Churches and Church Groups * Elementary and Junior/Secondary Schools * Universities
and Colleges * Private Therapists and Counsellors * Employee Assistance Programs *
Family Service * Adult Learning Networks * THANS Member Agencies * Women's
Centres * *Work Activity Programs * Shelter Workshops and Residences * Family
Support/ Resource Centres * NADACA * Department of Community Services (local) *
Adult Protection * *Doctors * Hospitals * Youth Agencies (Public/Private) * Victim
Services * Human Resource Development Canada * Metropolitan Immigrant Society
Association * Matrix * *Parent Abuse Research Committee * Clients (former/current) *
Families * Sexual Assault Centres * Friends *

Other linkages extend beyond our communities:

BC Association of Workers with Abusive Men
Hinks Dellcrest Centre of Toronto (Bridges)
Canadian Association of Social Workers
Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers
Manitoba Association of Family Violence Workers

Recently **Alternatives** and **Bridges** were contracted by the Manitoba Association of Family
Violence Workers to provide professional development on innovations in working with men
re: violence against female partners. Internationally, they have also been asked to present
in both the USA and UK at conferences organized by the Dulwich Centre of Australia.
Additional international links include Sage Publications (California) and International
Association of Social Work with Groups (Michigan)

2. How Do We Work In Our Communities? [informal/formal linkages]

- * Interagency Committees

- * protocols with referring agencies including Family & Children's Services or
Children's Aid Societies, Transition House Association of Nova Scotia member
agencies, etc.

- * referral processes (to and from)

- * case conferencing and shared clientele
- * public education/awareness campaigns
- * community-based volunteer boards of directors (community accountability)
- * risk assessments
- * professional development
- * shared resources and training
- * space sharing arrangements and service combinations

3. Barriers to Linkages

- limited resources
- time to network is time away from programs
- awareness of services may be lacking within the community or parts of the community
- top down government approach
- cultural assumptions and biases

CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING

1. Impacts Associated with Long Waiting Lists

Most of Nova Scotia's men's programs have experienced long waiting lists on a regular basis. For some programs, there have at times been hundreds of referrals awaiting services for extended periods of time. These long waiting lists present us with many challenges and several risks:

- Referrals may not be made because programming is not immediately available
- Case management is compromised and a huge amount of what may be termed "engagement work" may be required which is not accurately reflected in our statistics
- Probation orders or parole orders may end before the client actually can enter the program
- Client motivational levels may decrease during the wait
- There may be substantive safety risks for partners/family members as the man is awaiting the start of programming
- The wait list also impacts on our own prevention work and on the development of any longer term work
- Programs may experience difficulty meeting the time-lines delineated in our Standards

To address the above impacts, **New Start** has changed from periodic intakes to a continual intake system and longer assessments to reduce waiting lists. Unfortunately the time constraints have led the program to have initial contacts made by voice mail and this may serve to discourage some potential clients. Even with the changes made by this program to accommodate continual intake and avoid wait lists, the staff are so busy dealing with the sheer number of referrals that they do not have the time to do outreach or offer second stage group work for men.

Second Chance learned in its struggle to reduce waiting times, that this can only be accomplished by reducing the program's emphasis on other areas of the work (i.e. public education) because of scarce human and program resources. In Cape Breton, over the past few years, several other agencies have explored the possibility of providing family violence

programming similar to that offered by **Second Chance**, without reducing referrals to **Second Chance** itself. It would seem that this attempt at duplication is not reflective of any sense that **Second Chance** is ineffective, but simply because it is overburdened. This is a trend that could result in services being offered by well-meaning but untrained individuals which could put women and children at risk. However, communities wonder whether it is appropriate or ethical to have potentially dangerous clients waiting long periods of time for service.

It is also important to remember that even with long wait lists, the actual need for programming is greater still. When programs reduce their waiting times, referrals usually start flooding in. This trend has been well documented by **Second Chance**.

2. **Increasing Demands for Service**

The demand for men's programming is on the rise. Referral rates are increasing and the number of referring agencies are increasing on a regular basis. **New Start**, for instance, notes a significant increase in referrals just from Child Protection agencies and **Second Chance** notes that referrals have increased from an average of 5.4 a month in 1999 to 11.4 a month for 2002-2003. As our communities develop a better understanding of the dynamics and incidence of violence against women and a greater awareness of program effectiveness, demands for service grow and likely will continue to grow.

Improved linkages within our community also increase referrals. **New Directions** recently noted that there were associated referrals to the program following public education presentations to a local church group. Changes to our criminal justice system and increased victim support programming within Justice are also leading to increased service demands. Program and client inter-relationships are growing and each person attending our programs may represent many additional contacts.

As part of the move towards "population health", local community health boards are increasingly seeing family violence as a health issue and are looking towards us for increased service provision. At the same time, there is an increasing number of calls from other community professionals wanting program information and also requesting staff to act in an advisory capacity relating to intimate partner abuse.

Unfortunately these increasing demands challenge our ability to provide enough programming to meet the needs. Probation referrals and referrals from Child Welfare Agencies, as they grow in number, also require additional tracking of client progress and follow-up with the referring sources. Chronic underfunding of our programs has always made it extremely difficult to meet these administrative needs.

3. Meeting Client Needs

Our programs are also challenged by both increasing demands for service and attempts to meet changing client needs. Some of these needs have always been present in our communities but simply have not been addressed because of resource limitations. Resources have never kept pace with the diversity of needs presented to us. Materials need to be adjusted and resources dedicated to meeting the specific programming requirements of unique communities, such as:

- clients with significant addiction issues
- clients with mental health problems
- clients with different accessibility needs²
- homeless men or families
- clients for whom English is a second or third language
- clients coming from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds
- new immigrants

Referrals are also being received from groups for whom our programs were never designed and for whom new programming would have to be explored in greater detail:³

- lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, or trans-gender relationships
- women who have been accused of using abuse
- cases of sibling abuse, parent abuse or other relative abuse

4. Provincial Coverage

Our programs often receive referrals and inquiries regarding service from areas of the province where programs are not being offered. The demand in some of these areas is great enough to justify the establishment of new programs or branch programming from current service providers. Areas of the province served by a Transition House should have a corresponding men's intervention program with sufficient resources to cover the same catchment area.

2

Second Chance notes that a significant number of its clients are on Canada Pension Disability and experience accessibility problems due to their disability in combination with financial difficulties. Access issues are further complicated by Nova Scotia's geography, weather patterns, and general lack of transportation outside the major urban centres. It has also been noted that clients residing in close proximity to programs, tend to pursue services beyond referral more than those at a distance, even though within the general catchment area.

3

Offering new programming in these areas would require an in-depth examination of community needs and other community resources as well as a realistic assessment of the program's capacity to enhance or extend programming.

Areas for which the need for enhanced coverage is fairly well documented include:

- Yarmouth/Digby Area
- Valley Region
- Upper Cape Breton, Inverness County, Victoria County, Richmond County, and Port Hawkesbury

5. Local Coverage

Most of Nova Scotia's funded Men's Intervention Programs also lack the resources (especially the human resources) to completely meet the service demands for the counties they are serving now. For instance, **Alternatives** has been asked to offer services to clients in the Shelburne and Annapolis Valley areas although the single men's counsellor is already facilitating four groups in addition to having 40-60 individual counselling sessions a month. Similarly, **New Leaf** has offered programming from its New Glasgow base to clients in Antigonish County and around Port Hawkesbury.

Even when serving clients closer to home base, the lack of public transportation (for most of Nova Scotia), the lack of financial assistance for low-income clients, and the lack of child care services may preclude some potential clients from receiving the services they need.

There is a clearly defined need for additional outreach programming into rural Nova Scotia as well as a rapidly increasing need for more prevention and early intervention work. Unfortunately, limitations on staffing and other resources have presented formidable barriers to meeting such needs.

6. Resource Limitations

Although this has been alluded to throughout the challenges mentioned above, inadequate staffing presents a monumental challenge for all programs. Case loads are at an all time high and are very high when compared to other types of counselling programs funded by the Province of Nova Scotia.

In examining even one program, for instance **Alternatives**, it is obvious that one 35 hour a week counsellor who is already conducting 4 group sessions, seeing 40-60 individuals for counselling each month, cannot also be responsible for all program research and development and handle all program administration from returning phone calls to finances and government and community liaison.

Nova Scotia's Men's Intervention Programs are grossly underfunded now. They have minimal administrative budgets and inadequate staffing levels, making resolution of the challenges identified above extremely unlikely without financial assistance. All programs are operating at the highest level of efficiency possible. Fundraising for men's programming

is difficult at best and takes away human resources from service delivery. Dealing with our current funding challenge has certainly impacted negatively on client services as staff balance Coalition and Association work with their programming schedules.

7. **Staff Overload:** Staff of the Men's Intervention Programs invite the man who has been using abusive behaviours to take responsibility for his abuse, while addressing the safety issues for women and children affected by that behaviour. This can lead to significant vicarious stress and even trauma for counsellors. This is exacerbated by heavy workloads and minimal opportunities to debrief or share concerns given our staffing limitations.

Inadequate funding, a general lack of professional development opportunities, the lack of staff supports and the added demoralization associated with constant funding cuts or threats of such cuts has created the atmosphere wherein staff could easily experience burnout as they attempt to provide services we are not adequately funded nor supported to provide.

NEXT STEPS FOR US

The Association of Men's Intervention Programs recognizes that once its challenges have been identified, a plan of action is needed to start addressing these. Towards this end, we have identified the following priorities:

1. **Waiting Lists** - Each program will determine the length of its waiting list and determine whether the time guidelines for service set out in the Standards of Practice can be met without program change. Inter-program consultation around best practices associated with maintaining lowered waiting list lengths will be explored.
2. **Material and Resource Review** - A program review of current and future client needs will be initiated within our communities. Programs will consult locally and regionally on both these needs and recommendations for programming adjustments through some kind of strategic planning process.

For instance, services for people who have been abusive in same sex relationships would require programs to revise any heterosexist assumptions and materials. Understanding the power dynamics and unique needs of victims in same sex relationships requires community collaboration, training and policy development to ensure ethical and safe services can be offered. Services exploring such new programming will require a significant investment of new resources.

Programs need to work more in partnership with individuals and groups that are under-represented in most mainstream services to address the cultural differences and added barriers they face. These differences may constrain people who have been marginalized from seeking help to address abuse issues.

3. **Program Evaluation and Assessment** - All of our programs recognize the need for more best practices research, strategic planning processes, and long term follow up. Our programs will be initiating such processes but do not have sufficient financial resources for this work. It is hoped that the Department of Community Services will be able to help us find the needed funds for the completion of this process.

Programs need to develop and explore innovative and additional effective ways of providing counselling services. Longer term or later stage work is needed in most parts of the province, although the demand for our current work continues unabated. To date, our lack of resources and the strong demand for direct client services has left little time to develop strategies to evaluate programs.

Feedback from clients has always indicated positive perceptions of our programs and programming outcomes. We need to identify the resources by which we can develop a sound methodology to evaluate our programs, staff and client progress.

4. **Increased linkages and collaborative efforts** - Community based programs are dependent upon the continuation of our community networks and collaborative efforts. Each program must look at the linkages it has and see when and where it can address the barriers to those linkages. One idea for exploration - **Alternatives** has monthly professional development meetings at its offices including participants from mental health, addictions, and the local transition house.

Each program will explore better (i.e. more automatic) referrals from Children's Aid or Family & Children's Services. Improved referral processes will be explored with other community based agencies and the criminal justice system as well.

Programs have enjoyed a stronger working relationship with their Coalition partners throughout this "redesign process". This relationship will be fostered as programs try to meet changing client needs within the community. For instance, a collaborative process may help find the best programming for women charged with partner abuse - best utilizing the services available through the local transition house, women's centre and the women's component of the men's program. **New Start** has started to explore the development of information (psycho-educational) sessions for women to allow them to explore the differences between anger and abuse in relationships. This might help address women's experience of retaliatory anger after years of abuse.

5. **Improved Program Networking and Sharing** - Programs will endeavour to do more administrative sharing when possible or feasible. Other opportunities for sharing or increased networking could be applied to common areas of concern including shared training opportunities and program development.

6. **Second Chance** - This program will continue its active exploration of feasibility and partnership options with Corrections (Probations) and an active exploration of the feasibility of a takeover of **Second Chance** operations by the Cape Breton branch of Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia. This will be in addition to the exploration of other positive linkage options. Throughout such explorations, emphasis will be on maintenance of core standards, philosophies and services, as a basic requirement before **Second Chance** enters into any kind of service relationship with other organizations. For instance, the program would remain feminism informed, community accountable, and with a full Women's Component.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT

1. **We recommend that all existing programs be maintained and supported with full and sustainable funding from the Department of Community Services.**

We strongly support the Department's focus on and recognition of our efficiencies and effectiveness. The reality we often struggle with, in both our front line work and in our community roles, is the impossibility of sustaining efficient and effective work when our programs are not fully funded. It is not enough to reduce the risks of any further demise of the meager resources allocated for this important work against family violence - it is crucial that full support and funding be committed.

This full support, including full time administrative support, would allow for effective, cost-efficient, sustained and enhanced facilitation of our services, allowing counselling staff the time and energy to serve clients in our communities. For instance, we would like to see the Department commit staffing and resources to the same level the government provides for Addiction Services.

Men's Intervention Programs directly assist the Department by providing critical services for those in our community who are the most vulnerable. By working with men who use abuse in intimate relationships and by helping those women and children exposed to violence in the home, we are working with the Department to end the cycle of violence in Nova Scotia. Our clients, their partners and their families desperately need to be served efficiently and effectively through full government funding of our programs.

2. **We recommend that we enter into a discussion with the Department regarding the opening of branch offices or the provision of additional resources so programs can cover areas of the province not currently receiving services.**

Services are not being offered in an equitable fashion throughout the Province and yet the need appears constant. We would like to discuss the resources that would be needed to provide this additional coverage and ensure family violence is addressed appropriately in all areas of the province. This exploration of options might also include expansion of programming to cover additional forms of family violence, i.e. sibling abuse or parent abuse once we had the appropriate level of resources to deliver our core services.

- 3. We recommend the Department assist existing programs by facilitating requests for federal funding to support additional programming and research into best practices. This assistance could also be applied to other provincial government departments.**

Additional programs, similar to those offered in other jurisdictions across Canada should be explored, as well as best practices and innovation in programming. There are only six funded programs in this province yet there are literally hundreds of programs across Canada. The Department could assist us in locating funding to access these other resources and share in their expertise.

- 4. We recommend that the Department assist us with the establishment of a communication infrastructure to support a sound information system.**

Given the geographic realities and limited resources involved in our work, the establishment of a strong communication network with the ability to support case and issue conferencing, opportunities to share programming information and best practices would improve program effectiveness even further and maximize our resources.

- 5. We recommend that the Department further assist us to improve our efficiency by allowing us to explore options for free programming space, support staff, research expertise, etc.**

There are literally no efficiencies left for us to find in providing our services. Free programming space, access to government suppliers, and administrative assistance could provide us with help at minimal if any cost to the Department. Although this would not replace the additional human resources or funding required to offer services equitably around the province, it could help programs maintain the quality of their services.

- 6. Most importantly, we recommend that the Department of Community Services work with the Association of Men's Intervention Programs to develop a framework for looking at the issues of family violence.**

Government and community need to work together and share the commitment to ending violence against women. This complex social problem requires the resources of government, the expertise of service providers and the will of the community as a whole if we are going to end the cycle of violence.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion we would like to ask that the Department of Community Services consider the following questions:

- ? *What does it cost to keep a man in jail for one year?*
- ? *What does it cost to try one case of violence against women?*
- ? *What does it cost to have one man followed by Probation Services?*
- ? *What are the health care costs of family violence?*
- ? *What are the costs to families, remembering those multiple family connections?*
- ? *What are the costs to the workplace for absenteeism?*
- ? *What are the costs to the community at large?*
- ? *What are the costs of family break up after abuse?*
- ? *What are the educational costs for children dealing with the effects of violence in the home?*

The answers can already be found in many government studies and publications and the recommendations to reduce such costs are already part of such documents as the Russell Report and the Evaluation of the Framework for Action Against Family Violence - and the answers clearly suggest that the need for our programs has already been demonstrated.

True efficiencies for the Department can only be realized in the prevention and intervention of domestic violence and its consequential human and economic costs.

Any examination of our financial statements shows evidence of micro-level effectiveness. Any possible improvement in our mezzo-level effectiveness requires adequate funding. Improvement in our macro-level effectiveness requires both adequate funding and the support of the provincial government for all existing men's intervention programs and the development of new programs or adequate branches in areas with little or no access to existing services.

The cycle of violence cannot end as long as abusive behaviours are not addressed. The cycle cannot end when generational lessons continue. The cycle cannot end when family violence robs all family members of positive opportunities. Family Violence is a huge social problem requiring all of us, government and community, to work together.

Our community based autonomous work will benefit the entire province. We need to know that your investment in the solutions to family violence will be congruent to the magnitude of the social problem.