Building a Safer Community: 
Gang, Drug & Domestic Violence Issues 

Domestic Violence and Local Government 

February 28 & 29, 2008
Presentation Overview

1:00 to 3:30

1. Statistical Profile of Domestic Violence: The Distressing News

2. Strategies: The Promising News
   - Police/Community/Local Government Partnerships:
     - Domestic Violence Units
   - Other Local Government/Community Partnerships
     - Safety Audits, Local Safe Havens, Transitional Houses, CCWS

3. Dialogue, Discussion & Question and Answer
Community Coordination
For Women’s Safety

A Program of
The BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance
and Counselling Programs

In collaboration with

The Ministry of Community Services
The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Speakers and Workshop Organizers

Superintendent Byron Boucher, D/Criminal Operations, RCMP “E” Division

Deputy Chief Mike Chadwick, Saanich Municipal Police Department and Representative of the BC Association of Chiefs of Police

Tracy Porteous, Executive Director, The BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs
Speakers and Workshop Organizers:

Sonja Boyce, Executive Director, Surrey Women’s Centre, Surrey Domestic Violence Unit

Inspector Richard Konarski
Langley RCMP Special DV Investigation Unit

Heather Whiteford,
Manager, Victim Services Division
New Westminster Family Services
Family Services of Greater Vancouver

Detective Constable Terry Wilson
New Westminster Municipal Police DVRT
Speakers and Workshop Organizers:

Gail Edinger
Regional Coordinator
Community Coordination for Women’s Safety
International Agencies such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and Amnesty International have identified violence against women as a global human rights issue.
One in six women suffer abuse: WHO

One woman lost twins after being hit in the stomach by the father of her unborn babies, another sleeps in a locked bedroom to protect herself from the partner who has threatened to shoot her.

They are among the one in six women worldwide who suffer from domestic violence.

In some communities up to two in three females have been harmed by their husband, live-in partner or boyfriend, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) study.

“Society has condoned this for far too long,” said Joy Phumaphi, assistant director-general of Family and Community Health at the WHO.

“It is also very, very clear from the study that a large number of women do not report this. One-fifth of them do not share the information, at all, with anybody,” she told Reuters.

The report, based on interviews with 24,000 women in 10 countries ranging from Japan and Thailand to Namibia and Peru, is the first comprehensive global study to assess the extent of domestic violence, its effect on women and the response by governments and communities.

It paints a harrowing picture of broken bones, bruises, burns, cracked skulls, dislocated jaws, rape and fear. Often the cycle is repeated from one generation to the next.

REUTERS
Why Focus on Women?

Gender-based violence is perhaps the most wide-spread and socially tolerated of human rights violations.

It both reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims.

Why Focus on Women?

Violence against women is a persistent and ongoing problem in Canada and around the world. It affects women’s social and economic equality, physical and mental health, well-being and economic security.

*Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*  
Statistics Canada
Why Focus On Women?

Women are more likely than men to be the victims of the most severe forms of spousal assault, as well as spousal homicide, sexual assault and stalking.

Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006
Statistics Canada
Why Focus on Women?

Women are:

- 6 times more likely than men to report being sexually assaulted
- 5 times more likely to require medical attention as a result of assault
- 3 times more likely to be physically injured
- Almost twice as likely to report being threatened with or having a gun or knife used against them
- Much more likely to fear for their lives or the lives of their children

Spousal Abuse: A Fact Sheet From the Department of Justice Canada
Why Focus on Women?

The experience of violence is only part of the picture. For the majority of women in Canada, knowledge of the risk of violence translates into fear of victimization:

• Over half of women say they restrict their lives in order to be safe on a daily basis.

• Victimization and fear have severe implications for women’s health and well-being, and that of the entire community.

Why Focus on Women?

When women experience their social and physical environments as unsafe, they experience all sorts of barriers to free and full participation in employment, education, community activities, and local decision-making processes.

Women and Community Safety, An Integrated Strategy, Cowichan Valley Safer Futures (Cowichan Women Against Violence Society) March, 2002
Why Focus on Women?

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities recognizes that building safer communities for women is essential from both a community development and crime prevention perspective.
What is Domestic Violence?

- **Physical assault**: hitting, punching, choking, slapping, pulling hair
- **Sexual assault**: any form of forced sexual activity
- **Threats and Intimidation**
- **Criminal Harassment/Stalking**
- **Emotional abuse**: insults, intimidation, control, isolation, mind games, put downs
- **Financial abuse**: controlling, stealing and withholding money
- **Spiritual/cultural abuse**: restricting spiritual or cultural practices or beliefs
- **Murder**
Domestic Violence is a Power Based Crime

### PHYSICAL ABUSE
- Threats: Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her emotionally. Threatening to take the children, commit suicide, report her to the Ministry of Children and Families.
- Using children: Making her feel guilty about the children, using the children to give messages, using visitations as a way to harass her.
- Using male privilege: Treating her like a servant. Making all the “big” decisions. Acting like the “master of the castle.”
- Intimidation: Putting her in fear by: using looks, actions, gestures, loud voice, smashing things, destroying her property. Hiding or destroying important papers.
- Economical abuse: Trying to keep her from getting or keeping a job. Making her ask for money, giving her an allowance, taking her money.

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- Putting her down or making her feel bad about herself, calling her names. Making her think she’s crazy. Mind games.

### ISOLATION
- Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, where she goes. Isolating her from friends, family, anyone who speaks her language.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE
- Punching, kicking, grabbing, slapping, choking, pulling hair.
Domestic Violence - How Common?

One quarter of all violent crimes reported to a sample of police services across Canada in 2001 involved cases of family violence.

Statistics Canada 2005
Domestic Violence

The most dangerous types of incidents for Police involve attendance at Domestic Violence calls.
Domestic Violence - How Common?

10,273 incidents of violence in relationships were reported to BC police in 2005:

• 9% increase since 2004
• 74% involved a male offender
• 16% involved a female offender
• Represents 26% of all assaults in BC
Domestic Violence - How Common?

Spousal violence makes up the single largest category of convictions involving violent offences in non-specialized adult courts in Canada over the five-year period 1997/98 to 2001/02.

Over 90% of offenders were male.

Statistics Canada 2006
Domestic Violence - How Common?

The 2004 General Social Survey on Victimization found that Aboriginal people were three times more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be victims of domestic violence.
Safety is a Complex Concept

It involves being free of controlling tactics on the violence continuum.

For some women it is a life long process, with incremental changes and setbacks.

No sure way to improve safety or predict risk.

The use of violence is the abuser’s choice.
Domestic Violence - Pregnancy

In Canada, 1 in Every 5 Women Assaulted By A Partner Is Assaulted During Pregnancy

Statistics Canada, Family Violence in Canada, 1999
Canadian Women’s Foundation’s Violence Against Women Fact Sheet
Domestic Violence - Separation

A recent survey found that nearly one in five separated women were assaulted while they were separated.

Of those women who were assaulted, 35% reported that their husbands became more violent after the separation.

A Statistical Profile. Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women
Domestic Violence - Children

• **Death & Injury**

  In Quatsino, Jay Handel killed his six children.

• **Witnessing**

  Almost 40% of women assaulted by spouses said their children witnessed the violence against them (either directly or indirectly) and in many cases the violence was severe. In half of the cases of spousal violence against women that were witnessed by children, the woman feared for her life.

Statistics Canada 2007
Summary: Risk Factors

Separation
Escalation
Past Assault
Threats
Suicidal
Minimizing
Pregnancy
Stalking
Sexual Assault

Animal Abuse
Mental Health Issues
Control
Criminal History
Employment Issues
Substance Abuse
Violation of Court
Child Abuse
Domestic Violence - Why Women Stay

Leaving increases the risk!!

- Fear, threats to her or kids or family or pet, partner threatens suicide

- Financial dependency - no options

- Doesn’t realize the level of danger she is in - minimizes
Domestic Violence - Why Women Stay

Female socialization re keeping family together - accommodating

- “You made your bed now you have to lie in it”
- “Children need their father”
- “Don’t air your dirty laundry in public” (wife assault being a private matter.
- Ashamed to come forward
Domestic Violence - Why Women Stay

• Most women don’t want to leave, just want the abuse to stop
• She loves him
• Has had kids with him
• Hopes that he will change - He promises to
• Feels she deserves this - Witnessed mother in similar situation
• Feels safer with the harm she knows than with the unknown
Domestic Violence

Criminal Harassment/Stalking

Examples of Criminal Harassment:

- Calling over and over again, and perhaps hanging up when answered
- Contacting the woman on the Internet or through constant e-mail messages
- Following the woman and/or her family or friends
- Leaving threatening voice messages
- Sending the woman gifts she does not want
- Threatening the woman, her children, family, pets or friends

Stalking is a Crime Called Criminal Harassment Department of Justice Canada
Domestic Violence
Criminal Harassment/Stalking

In 2004:

- Stalking is the number one risk factor for actual and attempted murders of women (McFarlane et. Al, 2002)

- 75% of criminal harassment (“stalking”) incidents reported to the police were directed at women

- 50% of the women were stalked by a person with whom they had an intimate relationship

- 90% of people reported for stalking are men (Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends, Statistics Canada, 2006)

- Two thirds (66%) of all criminal harassment incidents occurred at the victim’s home.
Domestic Violence - Homicide

Murder of a female partner is most likely to occur in the context of marital separation or Divorce

Domestic Violence - Homicide

In Canada:

- 1,056 intimate partner homicides in a ten year period
- 846 women killed (80%)
- 210 men killed (20%)
- 70% of deaths had a police history of domestic violence *

*Family Violence in Canada, A Statistical Profile, 2004
Statistics Canada
Domestic Violence - Homicide

74% of all murder-suicides involved an intimate partner

Of these, 96% were females killed by their intimate partners

95% of the offenders were male

American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States, 2005 Violence Policy Centre
Spousal murders up in B.C.

STATSCAN: Rate doubles in one year but in line with 10-year average

BY JAN BAILEY
POLITICAL REPORTER

The rate of spousal murders in B.C. more than doubled last year over 2004.
Statistics Canada reported yesterday that there were 13 "victims of spousal homicide" in 2005, up from five cases the previous year.
"It's significant," said Mani Gauthier, a senior information officer with the Ottawa-based Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
She noted that the number, which include the deaths of male and female spouses, has essentially doubled over a single year.
"I don't know specifically why it would have gone up. We're not in the 'why' business," Gauthier said.
"This could just be a blip. It might be a trend that is starting. But most of the spousal homicides have been declining since the mid-70s in general."
The 2005 figure is above the 10-year B.C. average of 12 deaths. The figure was 13 in 2003.
Irene Elhaimer, manager of the Women Against Violence Against Women Rape-Crisis Centre in Vancouver, finds the figures disturbing.
"It's horrendous," Elhaimer said.
"If this were another identifiable group, let's say, members of parliament, we would have incredible outrage. A national strategy..."
Domestic Violence - Homicide

In half of all cases of killings of female ex-partners, the woman was killed within two months of leaving the relationship

(Dept. of Justice Fact Sheet, retrieved June 2006)
Domestic Violence - Homicide

Studies indicate that 2/3 of intimate-partner femicides involve battering of the victim by her male partner before her death

Barriers often make it difficult for women to access critical support systems.

This was the case for a number of women involved in domestic violence tragedies in British Columbia in recent years:
Domestic Violence Homicide in BC

- Sherry Heron suffered from physical disabilities related to injuries to her head and pelvis
- Lorraine Moon was an Aboriginal woman living on reserve
- Denise Purdy was an Immigrant woman of colour
- Sonya Handel and her 6 children lived in a very isolated rural setting
Coroners’ inquests and/or local inquiries revealed what were missing in all these cases:

- A coordinated response system
- A network that could identify and address risk and provide specialized support in a coordinated and productive way involving a variety of systems

These BC findings echoes similar inquests outcomes in Ontario
Domestic Violence - Costs

There are four major types of costs:

1. Services, largely funded by government:
   - Criminal Justice System, Victim Services, Counselling and Shelter, Health Care, Social Services, Housing, Civil Legal

2. Economic output losses, sustained by employers and employees;

3. Human and emotional costs, borne by individual victims, offenders, families, neighbors, friends, school mates and co workers;

4. Costs to Communities
   - The reputation of a town of being a safe place to live
   - The sense of “safety” of a town’s citizens
   - The reduced ability of some citizens to full participation due to the impacts of violence
Domestic Violence - Costs

Spousal violence costs Canadian society an estimated 4.2 billion per year

- Social services
- Education
- Criminal justice
- Labour
- Health and medical costs

Domestic Violence - Costs

Criminal Justice costs alone are an estimated 871 Million

(L. Greaves, O. Hankivsky, Selected Estimates of the Costs of Violence Against Women, 1995)

Health costs related to spousal abuse were found to total more than 1.5 Billion

Domestic Violence - Costs

- 62% of Canadian women are in the labour force

- In BC 39% of women in the labour force have experienced violence by a present or former intimate partner. (Statistics Canada, 1999)

- 74% of abused women are harassed by their abuser at work. (The Cost of Domestic Violence, Friedman, I. & Cooper, S. 1987)
Domestic Violence - Costs

According to a World Bank study, one work day in every five lost by women is the result of health problems associated with domestic violence.

United Nations, Violence Against Women, prepared for Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, September 1995, New York, page 1
The World Bank has estimated that in industrialized countries, sexual assault and domestic violence take away almost one in five healthy years of life of women aged 15 to 44.

"Health Aspects of Violence Against Women: A Canadian Perspective", by Diane Kinnon and Louise Hanvey, Women's Health Forum, Ottawa, 1995
A survey in Canada revealed that 30% of battered women had to cease regular activities and 50% had to take sick leave from work because of injuries related to Domestic Violence.

Quantifying Selected Major Risks to Health, The World Health Organization
Domestic Violence - Costs

Children exposed to family violence are more likely to develop social, emotional, psychological and or behavioral problems than those who are not.

In families where the mother is assaulted by the father, daughters are at risk of sexual abuse 6.51 times greater than girls in non abusive families. (Bowker, Arbitell and McFerron, 1988)
Domestic Violence - Costs

A child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk fact for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next

Domestic Violence - Costs

Male children who witness the abuse of mothers by fathers are more likely to become men who batter in adulthood than those male children from homes free of violence

Domestic Violence - Costs

“I believe domestic violence - whether its verbal or physical is related in some way to every social problem facing this Country.

If we could get a handle on domestic abuse, we could get a handle on a lot of social problems that we’re spending millions of dollars on today.”

(Casey Gwinn, San Diego City Attorney, The Toronto Star, March 16, 1996)
Specialized Response Programs in BC

- 102 Stopping The Violence Counselling Programs
- 62 Community Based Victim Assistance Programs
- 50 Stopping The Violence Outreach Programs
- 60 Transition Houses
- 20 Safe Homes and Second Stage Programs
- 90 Children Who Witness Abuse Programs
- 85 Court Ordered Assaultive Men’s Treatment Programs
- 90 Policed Based Victim Assistance Programs
- 60 Coordinated Community Response Committees
The Promising News

How Local Governments are Helping:

Strategies:

• Police/Community/Local Government Partnerships:
  • Domestic Violence Units

• Other Local Government/Community Partnerships
  • Safety Audits, Local Safe Havens, Transitional Housing, Community Coordination for Women’s Safety
Domestic Violence Units

- New Westminster
- Vancouver
- Richmond
- Surrey
Domestic Violence Units

Interview Style DVU Overview

• Heather Whiteford, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Domestic Violence Units
• Insp. Richard Konarski, Langley RCMP
• Sonya Boyce, Surrey Women’s Centre, Surrey DVU
• D/C Terry Wilson, New Westminster Police, Domestic Violence Response Team
Domestic Violence Units

The Model

A collaborative team that provides in-depth investigation and victim support for high risk cases of domestic violence after the crisis response.
Current Domestic Violence Units

Police
- Dedicated Officer
- Shared office space in the Detachment
- Access to Vehicle
- Equipment

Community Victim Services
- Domestic Violence Worker
- Training
- Supervision
- Administration
Other Local Government/Community Partnerships—Some Examples

- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- Nelson
- Regional District of Comox-Strathcona
- Williams Lake
- New Westminster
- The District of 100 Mile House
- Creston Shelter for Abused (Older) Women
How Local Governments are Helping:

- Involvement in Violence Against Women Coordination Committees
- Community and Social Planning through a Gendered Lens
- Tax breaks for Women’s Services
- Grants to programs that support women and children dealing with violence
- Community safety initiatives, safety audits, etc.
- Cost sharing of victim service programs
How Local Governments are Helping:

- Policy development regarding safety initiatives; ie: street lighting in dark areas
- Involvement/leadership in homeless initiatives
- Social planning, 100 Mile House, Cowichan Regional District
- Dec. 6 vigils (permits, space...)
- Disaster planning that includes safe places for women
- Domestic Violence Units
Community Safety

In a study of rural women who were abused by their partners, researchers found that rural women stayed in abusive relationships five to seven years longer than women living in urban areas because of lack of resources, and isolation from support systems.

Local governments play a critical role in creating safer communities through their various roles as civic leaders, employers, planners, managers of community environments, and providers of recreational and social services.
Cowichan Valley Regional District
Community Safety Advisory Committee

- An outcome of the work of Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Project, Cowichan Valley Women Against Violence Society

- Formed in 2003, replacing Women’s Safety Advisory Committee (1996)

- Maintains a gender lens

- Standing committee of the CVRD Board appointed on an annual basis.
General Terms of Reference

- To advise on Community Safety issues within the Regional District, including safety audits and safety related funding requests
Cowichan Valley Regional District
Rural Transportation

- Transit stop audit
- Transit safety plan
- Free transit proposal
Nelson City Council

- Nelson City council up until next year has forgiven the taxes for the Women's Centre and the Transition House
• Regional District of Comox-Strathcona forgives the property taxes on Lilli (Transition) House
15 Safe Havens in Williams Lake when the project completed in 2006.
Mayor Scott Nelson and Council partnered with the Community Policing Committee to bring Jackson Katz in to speak to men and boys about how they can address violence against women.
New Westminster City

Has been involved for years in Prevention of Violence Against Women Week Activities:

- Making the proclamation, allowing candlelight vigils at City Hall);

- Council members regularly attend Action Committee meetings.
100 Mile House
Community Resources Forum

Sponsored by:

- The District of 100 Mile House
- The UBCM Community Health Promotion Fund
- The South Cariboo Community Planning Council

In Partnership With:

- The 100 Mile House & District Women’s Centre Society
CRESTON ~ Kootenai Community Centre Society

Collaborative partnership of Federal, Provincial, Municipal and Regional governments, community non-profit agencies, local credit union, and individual supporters.

Two independent transitional suites, a family shelter unit and a counselling and group meeting office space.
Community Collaboration to End Violence Against Women

Survivor

Police and Justice System

Municipality

Faith Communities

Multicultural Services

Aboriginal Support Services

Medical Services

STV Counselling programs, Outreach Programs and Children’s Programs

Transition Houses/ Safe Homes

Assaultive Men’s Treatment
What is Coordination?

Improving safety by facilitating and promoting functional structures, policies and practices so that the response systems collaborate and coordinate with others, are more accessible to women, and therefore contribute, rather than detract from their safety.
Community Coordination for Women’s Safety

Key Program Areas

1. Community Development/Capacity Building
2. Analysis of Issues and Finding Solutions
3. Resource Development
4. Training
5. Web-Based and Other Electronic
6. Newsletter
1. To work with communities to develop, enhance and sustain integration of services, responses and policies on violence against women

- With a particular focus on rural isolated communities, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities and immigrant and refugee women
Community Development

CCWS led Invermere meeting to develop new integrated response to violence in relationships
2. To develop and disseminate relevant analysis, resources, tools and information in support of the integration of services, responses and policies.
Building Partnerships to End Violence Against Women
A Practical Guide for Rural and Isolated Communities

CCWS's most popular resource with over 1000 copies distributed across Canada

Includes practical tips for building partnerships, exercises and handouts that can be copied and used by community groups

Development, printing and distribution funded by Department of Justice Canada
CCWS Program Mandate

3. To address, from an inter-sectoral perspective, policy implementation issues at a provincial level in collaboration with leaders in key sectors and representatives from Aboriginal, disability and immigrant communities.
CCWS Program Mandate

• Work to track and develop negotiated solutions to issues that arise locally but may require response at a provincial or other level.
Community Coordination for Women’s Safety

- 60 Coordination Initiatives across BC
- Violence Against Women Committees meet monthly or quarterly
Community Coordination for Women’s Safety

Representatives from

- Local government
- Anti-violence services, including Community Victim Services and Counselling for women and children
- Transition Houses
- Aboriginal and Multi-cultural services
- Police and Police victim services
Community Coordination for Women’s Safety

- Corrections
- MCFD
- Offender treatment programs
- Health,
- Mental health
- Hospitals
- Faith community
“The evidence clearly indicates that coordination serves to maximize victim safety, and thus is an important element in victim empowerment.”

“In general, the more coordinated the response, the greater the deterrent effect on assailants and the safer the victim.”

“Specific initiatives will continue to have limited impact without a coordinated consistent broad-based policy response across sectors.

It is recognized that the justice system cannot, and should not, address this problem on its own. Uncoordinated efforts will continue to result in waste of scarce resources, duplication of effort, disillusionment of staff working within systems, unmet public expectations and, most detrimentally, compromised victim protection.”

That police, government and community-based victim services agencies work together to develop inter-agency information sharing protocols and coordinated risk management strategies in violence in relationship cases.
Third party reporting protocol on sexual assault developed in partnership with the RCMP “E” Division, and The BC Chiefs of Police

Will encourage victims to come forward who might otherwise fear engagement with police by allowing for anonymous reporting through another agency.
Community Coordination for Women’s Safety Work at the Provincial Level

Safety Issues Protocol developed in collaboration with RCMP “E” Division

• Creates a process for fast tracking safety concerns for attention by District Officers
Community Coordination for Women’s Safety
Work at the Local Level

- The Surrey Violence Against Women Coordination Committee plans for Domestic Violence Unit in the Surrey Detachment.

- Sexual Assault Response Team for the Sea to Sky Corridor

- Training to the Kootenay and Bulkley Valley Regions re: coordinated responses to sexual assault
Nelson Regional Workshop: A Dialogue on Coordinating our Response to Women who Fear Further Retaliation, (or are otherwise known as “Reluctant”)

Nelson, Castlegar, Trail, Greenwood, Salmo and Creston
Community Coordination for Women’s Safety

Contact Information for CCWS:
The BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs

604 633 2506 (15)
www.endingviolence.org

Funding from
The Ministry of Community Services
QUESTIONS