

PEACE STARTS AT HOME

Family
Violence
Project
E-Letter Fall 2006



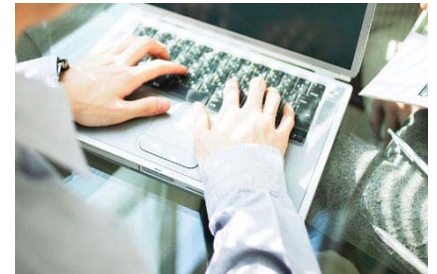
GREETINGS

Greetings from the co-located partners in the Family Violence Project located at 400 Queen Street, South, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W7.

We are sending this e-letter to all those who completed the "Call for Action" form at our conference in March as well as

to those who have expressed interest in the project. This is the first in what will be ongoing communication from the centre to keep interested individuals and agencies/services abreast of progress and developments within this exciting initiative.

If you do not wish to receive further communication, kindly



let us know and we will remove your name from our mailing.

PURPOSE OF CO-LOCATION

Family violence places enormous stress on families and, left unchecked, often creates a



ripple effect that can be carried forward by future generations. Family violence can affect all aspects of a person's well being and typically leaves its victims filled with fear, confusion and self doubt. It is unreasonable to then expect family violence victims to independently navigate a myriad of separately located agencies/

services and make good decisions for themselves and their families.

The cycle of family violence needs to be stopped in a way that makes sense for the victims. Support systems need to offer assistance in a manner that is victim driven not system driven.

THE FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT

With this focus being paramount, on January 1st 2006, a collaborative of agencies presently representing well over one hundred professionals began providing wrap around, seamless service delivery in a holistic response to family violence from a single location. Our goal is to assist victims and their families by providing essential services and multiple access points and choices all at one location. Each agency/service continues to be independently operated and managed but is committed to strengthening their services to clients through co-location of their service or through offering their services as a satellite office at The Family Violence Project.

While the list of co-located partners continues to

grow, it currently includes 10 organizations (see "The Partners" on pages 2 and 3).

This collaborative response to family violence within Waterloo Region is aimed at providing consistent and continuous supports and seamless delivery of services to victims and children. The collaborative partners are committed to working together to help families to find emotional/ physical safety and to work with the community

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THE PARTNERS

Catholic Family Counselling Centre of Waterloo Region (CFCC)

519-743-6333 www.cfcc.ca Contact Person: Pamela Mank

A full service, non-denominational, professional counselling agency, CFCC exists so that people find the strength, skills and confidence to deal with life's challenges and opportunities. For more than 50 years, CFCC has provided individual counselling, group programs, and community outreach to children, men, women, seniors, couples, families and new Canadians.

Credit Counselling – Catholic Family Counselling Centre (CFCC)

519-743-6333 Contact Person: Heather Cudmore

Credit counselling is a not-for-profit service that assists people facing financial hardships. Since 1956, this service has been providing confidential financial counselling, money management education, consumer repayment plans and intervention and mediation to help individuals and families resolve debt concerns.

Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)

519-749-1229 Contact Person: Nancy Kyle

CAPC is a federally funded project that supports children ages zero to six and their families so that these children may reach their full potential. A variety of supportive and preventative activities and programs are offered at a number of sites across the Region of Waterloo.

Crown Attorney's Office 519-741-3222

Ontario's Domestic Violence Court (DVC) program is the most extensive DVC program in Canada. It facilitates the prosecution of domestic assault cases and early intervention in abusive domestic situations, provides better support to victims and increases offender accountability.

In a DVC program, teams of specialized personnel, including police, Crown Attorneys, Victim/Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) staff, probation services, Partner Assault Response (PAR) program staff and community agencies, work together to ensure priority is given to the safety and needs of domestic assault victims and their children. As part of the Kitchener Domestic Violence program, an Assistant Crown Attorney with specialized domestic violence training has an office at the Centre.

Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region

519-576-0540 www.facswaterloo.org. Contact Person: Karen Spencer

Family and Children's Services is the local child welfare agency for the Waterloo Region. The agency's services are mandated under The Child and Family Services Act. Our vision is a community where children can grow up feeling safe, healthy and loved. In the fall of 2005, Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region formed a family violence team. The team was developed in order to provide a comprehensive range of services to children, mothers and fathers, where domestic violence is the primary reason for a child welfare response. The goal of service is to increase child safety and well-being. The team is comprised of intake workers, family service workers and counsellors. The family violence team actively seeks participation from parents in providing safety and security for their children. The team values a collaborative service approach to working with families and other service agencies who may be involved with them.

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to end the cycle of violence that so often damages and destroys families. The Family Violence Project is a unique and safe place where victims of family violence are our highest priority. It is a place where the staff understands and is sensitive to the unique needs related to family violence. The Family Violence Project provides a one stop access point for victims and their families.

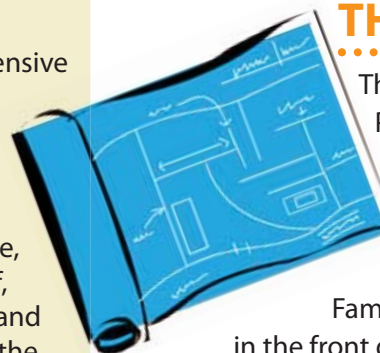
It is internationally recognized that family violence is the number one preventable crime that law enforcement responds to today. No one deserves to be abused. Families no longer need to suffer for years in silence. Taking the enormous step to reach out is the first step towards change, the first step towards safety.

THE MODEL

The Family Violence Project was inspired by a model that was developed in San Diego. Victims of

Family Violence walked in the front door of their Family

Justice Center, each taking that very difficult first step to seeking assistance. The victims reported on their terms, choosing not to call 9-1-1, access an emergency services communication centre or have uniformed police officers attend at their residence. We, here in Waterloo Region, are experiencing a similar trend with a growing number of victims simply walking in the front door. Our model inspired the San Diego Center to include elder abuse services as part of their partnerships. We recognize that the issue of domestic violence also needs to be inclusive of family violence and abuse at all generational levels. Visit: www.sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/info.



THE PARTNERS

Waterloo Regional Police Service – Domestic Violence Investigations Branch (WRPS) 519-579-9668 *Contact Person: Det. Sgt. Sean Tout*

Waterloo Regional Police Service has a dedicated team of detectives to investigate incidents of domestic violence where the commission of an offence has been identified. Domestic violence is any use of physical or sexual force, actual or threatened, in an intimate relationship. This includes opposite and same sex partners and current/former dating, common law and married couples. It also includes emotional/psychological abuse or harassing behaviour.

Waterloo Regional Police Service – Victim Services Unit

519-743-7243 *Contact person: Diane Martin or Susan Gordon*

The Victim Services Unit is a police-based program that began in 1982 and is staffed by civilian employees. The principal goal is to assist people in dealing with the consequences of victimization or tragic circumstances by providing crisis and ongoing emotional support, as well as information regarding community resources and, if a charge is laid, rights and responsibilities within the Criminal Justice System and the court process including terms of release and court updates.

Waterloo Regional Police Service - Elder Abuse Response Team (EART)

519-579-4607 www.ccacwat.on.ca *Contact Person: Arlene Groh*

The Elder Abuse Response Team, is a collaborative partnership between the Waterloo Regional Police Service and the Community Care Access Centre of Waterloo Region. Core funding is provided by each agency. EART's mission is to prevent and respond to elder abuse by working in partnership with the community and by providing an opportunity for change and healing to people affected by elder abuse, thereby enhancing the safety and well being of older adults. EART's mandate includes providing information and consultation, direct intervention, education and training and community development.

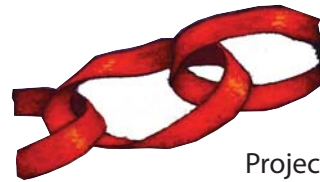
Waterloo Region Sexual Assault – Domestic Violence Treatment Centre (SATC) 519-749-6994 *Contact Person: Casey Cruikshank*

The Waterloo Region Sexual Assault – Domestic Violence Treatment Centre is a team of nurses, social workers and physicians who respond 24 hours, 7 days a week, to the emergency departments of Cambridge Memorial Hospital and St. Mary's General Hospital. When a patient who has experienced sexual or intimate partner violence arrives at the emergency department, with patient consent the SA/DV team responds within 45 minutes. Options for service include: collection of forensic evidence, photography of injuries, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, morning after pill, crisis counselling and referrals. The centre also provides short term counselling for those who do not access the hospital.

Women's Crisis Services (*Anselma House 519-742-5894 and Haven House 519-653-2422*) www.wcswr.org *Contact Person: Mary Zilney*

Women's Crisis Services provides emergency shelter to women and children escaping abusive relationships. Additionally, the Outreach Program assists women with safety planning, legal advocacy, housing and ongoing community support. Women and children who choose not to reside at the shelter are eligible for services. For those who opt to access our shelter services they are provided with ongoing support upon their discharge.

HELPING CLIENTS MAKE CONNECTIONS



When victims come to the Family Violence

Project located at 400

Queen Street, South in Kitchener, Ontario, they are offered choices that fit for them and their individual circumstances. They may want to access all of the services offered or select only a few. If they choose, we can also help them access services that are not at The Family Violence Project. Over many years, we have developed positive working relationships with other service providers and can assist in facilitating these referrals because of such ongoing relationships. This model relies on the partners, not the clients, taking the responsibility to make linkages and connections between services. All too often well meaning professionals have simply given clients the names/addresses of additional services expecting the client to make all of the connections and arrangements. The professionals have then been frustrated when clients do not follow through.

We have now come to recognize that, typically, a client's failure to follow through has not been a result of their lack of interest in making changes or seeking support. It has been the result of being overwhelmed, controlled, fearful, lacking in confidence and/or not having the financial/transportation/time/childcare resources to access these services. When professionals take responsibility to assist clients with directly making linkages of their choice, the results are quite different. There is follow through! Victims become empowered with information and options and they are able to see choices in their life rather than despair and continued violence. In communities where there are no co-located services, this linking or bridging for clients can make a huge difference. We want to encourage others to create these bridges within existing services, rather than waiting for co-location.

INFORMATION SHARING

We are currently working at developing collaborative “Consent to Release Information Forms” along with a shared information sheet to spare victims from having to repeat basic information at each access point. Women have told us that having to repeat the same information over and over again is wearing

and makes them feel like an object being processed not a person being listened to and understood. Client choice and confidentiality is always first priority when sharing information. Such sharing is only done with the client’s permission. The client chooses which information to share to with which resources.

SAFETY PLANNING

We have developed a basic Safety Plan that can be initially used by all partners to help victims increase their awareness and safety. This form is a living document that is regularly reviewed and modified as circumstances and risks change. We recognize that crisis services such as shelters and treatment centres connected to emergency services have decades of experience in this area and have developed

excellent tools and skills to help victims strategize for safety. It is important for communities to welcome and utilize the expertise available through these resources.

We are currently piloting a project with the Waterloo Regional Police where shelter Outreach Workers are doing all of the safety plans for victims of domestic violence referred by police where charges have been laid against the offender.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS/TOURS

To date we have had the pleasure of being invited to speak to other agencies/services both in our community and across Canada. We continue to be open to such opportunities. This not only gives us the chance to share about The Family Violence Project but also to take away information from other resources/communities and to make improvements.

A number of communities, including a group from Africa have toured The Family Violence Project and talked with representatives from the co-located services. We are happy to arrange for tours, answer questions and exchange information. Feel free to contact any of the co-located services or Pamela Mank at 519-743-6333, ext 229 or pmank@cfchelps.ca to arrange for a tour.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Assessing the risk of lethality and recidivism are prime concerns for services working with victims of family violence. The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Annual Report to the Chief Coroner has often highlighted that many of the domestic violence homicides they reviewed were predictable and potentially preventable. To actively prevent future tragedies, service providers need to be trained in and make use of some of the excellent tools currently available to assess risk.

At the Family Violence Project we are examining a number of tools and looking at what tool(s) would best serve the needs of our victims and services. We are also looking at how these tools can be utilized by other community based partners. It is critical that service providers are consistent in how they use these tools. Training and ongoing dialogue is essential. It is our

belief if women consistently receive the same information regarding lethality/recidivism at all access points they are better able to make plans that put safety first.



■ We recognize that so many of you have developed wonderful programs/projects/relationships in your own communities. We would welcome the opportunity to hear from you! You can contact any of the partner agencies directly and or reply to this email. We also encourage you to look at our individual partners’ websites as well as The Family Violence Project component of the CFCC Web site at www.cfcc.ca for information and links to family violence resources.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT
400 Queen Street South
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 1W7
For further information, call 519-743-6333.

www.cfcc.ca