

*"Building the smallest democracies at the heart of society."*  
The United Nations: The International Year of the Family, 1994

Agreement# 40063171

## Investigating Community Response to Intimate Partner Violence in the Northwest Territories



by *Dr. Pertice Moffit*

**F**aculty and students at Aurora College, as well as community members from Yellowknife, NWT, are engaged in a team project entitled *"Rural and Northern Community Response to Intimate Partner Violence* with **Mary Hampton** and **Dianne Delaney**, Principal Investigators from the University of Regina, Saskatchewan. We are over the halfway mark in this five year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded study. This is a perfect time to reflect on our accomplishments and continued progress in the study in our territorial jurisdiction.

The study uses a collaborative community-based approach at all levels of the research to address three research questions. What are the needs of women who experience intimate partner violence? What are the gaps in meeting the needs of women who experience intimate partner violence? What can we do to create and sustain non-violent communities?

Our territorial team consists of **Pertice Moffitt** (Academic Lead) and **Lyda Fuller** (Community Lead), along with **Heather Fikowski** (Co-Academic Investigator), several student research assistants (**Marshirette Mauricio**, **Ann Mackenzie**, and now **Cheryl Cleary**, **Valisa Aho**), **Gail Cyr** (Aboriginal Representative), **John Kelly** and now **Greg Towler** (RCMP Representatives). The team fluctuates as students graduate, members transfer, and with the birth of babies. We meet monthly with the Coalition against Family Violence, a territorial action group chaired by the Status of Women Council of the NWT. These meetings are salient to our interface with the community since this committee, of which we are members, has the pulse of community efforts in terms of activism, awareness, and education.

In the first year of the study we conducted an environmental scan of resources for women in the territory who experience IPV. Concurrently, the PI collected the reported incidents of IPV from the RCMP for all jurisdictions. With the statistics and results of the environmental scan, we initiated the creation of geographical information system (GIS) maps with the assistance of **Paul Hackett**, Research Team Member from the University of Saskatchewan. The maps provide a visual analysis of the territory in terms of the integration of the reported incidents of IPV and the resources available (particularly shelters, victim services, community health services, and RCMP).

Over the second year we interviewed front-line workers (RCMP, victim-service and shelter workers). The context of our territory dictated a different approach, as only five of the 33 communities in the NWT have designated shelters, and 11 communities are without RCMP. Many victims of IPV seek help at community health centres, which are staffed by community health nurses or social workers. Many communities simply have no resources and others may have no community health centre. The reality

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## Making a Connection...in Order to Make Change (Part I)



by Paul Klostermaier-Starkewski

As November, domestic violence awareness month, passed us by, I knew that the topic of intimate partner violence would fade out of the media spot light for another year, unless some horrific event places the topic in the news again. Unfortunately, my work with men who behave abusively toward their intimate partners—although not in the spotlight—is busy every month of the year.



When I started in this field I thought the pathways to stopping men from behaving abusively was straightforward. I, like most in the field, was trained through the lens of Power and Control and accepted this wholeheartedly as the foundation for working on changing these men's behaviour.

Before long, it became apparent that work in this field was not as straightforward as the research, training and literature made it seem. I first realized that many traditional counseling practices asked men to process things in ways that they are not used to, expecting them to speak of and label emotions other than anger. This did not help in my intervening with men who behave abusively toward their partners, men who have difficulty acknowledging emotions like fear, hurt, or loss, because of their more traditional/patriarchal ways of being.

I realized that the power and control model differed from more traditional counseling practices in that it allowed no room for men to define their reality. We defined it for them by our "telling" them that they are abusive and violent *because* of their desire for power and control. If men wanted to speak about life experiences that may have or still are affecting their life, it was seen as a diversionary tactic used to avoid talking about their abusive behaviour. Also different from traditional counseling practice was the lack of discussions, or at least acknowledgements of possible past victimization that men may have experienced as this was seen as irrelevant to the subject at hand—the men's use of power and control.

When it came to the topic of power and control, I struggled to focus only on this because I felt I unfairly simplified the complexities of power and control and the complexities of men's lives. I knew many of these men felt they had no power and control in their life because they were marginalized due to low income, limited education, unemployment and ethnicity.

Many times men appeared to be surprised and even frustrated by the suggestion their behaviour was purposeful and intended. What seemed even more frustrating was when some began to tell me of their own victimizations and/or pain only to have me quickly negate this conversation as my training had taught. These "stopped" conversations made me wonder how men who behave abusively could be so different than others, that we must treat their past life experiences as not an important part of why they sat in front of me.

Finally, my original training informed me that the Power and Control model was the *right* way to understand and change their behaviour. Further, if the men did not agree with this model, my role was to convince or even force them to accept this as fact. Thus, I became engaged with these men in confrontational techniques in which they excelled. Many men were more comfortable arguing with me about the model than examining their own motivations and behaviour. This led me to reflect on the goal of treatment...is it to get them to agree with a model that makes no sense to them, or is it to find a way to get them to examine their relationships and their behaviour?

I've realized this one dimensional model of power and control is not conducive to the creation of a strong rapport with the men in front of me, where it is crucial for them to reflect on their own behaviour, and hopefully try things differently. My next article—in the May 2014 Newsletter—will focus on what has helped me to be more successful working with this population of men. ☘

## Manitoba Update: *Preventive Policing: A New Road to Safer Communities*



by Jane Ursel

As a researcher and advocate for victims of domestic violence, I have often been in the position of contacting the Winnipeg Police Service to register a complaint or concern or to call for new initiatives to better serve victims. When the City of Winnipeg announced our new police chief a little over a year ago, **Chief Clunis** expressed the belief that crime prevention can be attained through social development and identified his interest in including a strong prevention perspective in policing. While I was very pleased to hear about such an interest, I understood that policing a community with very high rates of domestic violence calls to police and serious challenges around gangs in our city often leaves little energy and resources for prevention.

However, I have been very pleasantly surprised and pleased by a number of initiatives announced this year that indicate a strong prevention approach to policing:

1. A new approach to exploitation: In the November 9 issue of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, I read about the Winnipeg Police Service's commitment to a nine-member counter exploitation unit, including two non-enforcement officers. These officers will support and assist women and youth at high risk for exploitation in the sex-trade. Having completed a number of research projects with women and youth attempting to exit the sex-trade, I am aware of how frequently they are the victims of violence and abuse. I think this new initiative reflects this reality and provides a more supportive response to individuals experiencing exploitation in the sex-trade.

2. Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) Endowment Fund:

This fund has been designed for the advancement and enrichment of underserved and at-risk families and children. The goal of the fund is to subsidize recognized projects within the community, which support the WPS vision of creating a culture of safety. This is a very concrete fiscal commitment to building a safer and healthier community and it is also a very powerful statement of the WPS commitment to prevention.



Photos courtesy of The Winnipeg Foundation



3. A similar message is being communicated to the residents of Winnipeg with **Superintendent Bill Fogg's** involvement with the *Growing Active Kids* initiative jointly funded by the Province, the Federal Government, and the Winnipeg Foundation. This is a project that engages all levels of government and community to provide positive learning and playing environments for inner city kids. As the Winnipeg Foundation states "Kids are naturally curious and eager to learn new things. Presenting opportunities and supporting talents and interests at an early age—whether through sports or music lessons—helps them become healthier, stronger and more engaged adults. *Growing Active Kids* provides grants for educational, recreational and cultural activities

for Winnipeg youth living in social housing and surrounding neighbourhoods."

Prevention is often a very hard sell to police services because the fruits of such labour are sometimes many years down the road. It is encouraging to note that despite the many challenges our city faces, we haven't lost sight of the rich potential of investing in prevention. ❀

## Saskatchewan Update: *Adult Education at PATHS*



by *Kim Fellner*

**E**ducation is a growing focus at the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS). PATHS' mission is to provide integrated, collaborative support for PATHS members who work with individuals directly or indirectly exposed to violence, and to provide research, program development, public awareness and education on personal and family violence in Saskatchewan. In 2013, PATHS hired **Kim Fellner** as the adult education consultant to support this mission.

Combined with her understanding of domestic violence, Kim's experience in adult education is the right mix for PATHS. Kim began her professional work in the field of domestic violence at Regina Transition House, where she was hired to research, design and implement a shelter-based outreach program. She worked as Outreach Coordinator and followed up with women after their shelter stay, supported them in the community, and facilitated weekly support/educational groups. During this time she also contributed to public education on domestic violence and delivered presentations to professionals and community service workers. Kim is an instructor at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology and teaches in program areas that include Victim Service Coordination, Youth Care Worker, and Continuing Care Assistant. She is also a student in the Masters of Adult Education program at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Profession of Shelter and Service Work is a recent project within the scope of adult education. The purpose of this project was to create a profile of professional shelter and service workers in Saskatchewan, along with a hiring guide, hiring tools, and job descriptions specific to PATHS member agencies. Eleven PATHS member agencies across Saskatchewan participated in staff workshops and interviews as a primary data collection method in this project. It was important to hear from the experts—those doing the work—about what makes up this profession. Collected information was sorted and coded according to four broad themes: Skills, Values, Education, and Personal Strengths.

Skills is broadly defined in terms of tasks and actions. This theme includes not only specific abilities and competencies but also the many items that make up a daily "to-do" list. Essential skills related to client services, administration, community relations, communication, daily operations (of facilities), and groups/programs.

Values encompasses the ethics, beliefs, and guiding principles of the profession. Twelve main values were identified, which include boundaries, collaboration/teamwork, communication, compassion, confidentiality,

empathy, empowerment, equality, non-judgement, professionalism, respect, and support.

Education is both formal and informal education that Professional Shelter/Service Workers possess and/or receive from a variety of sources. This includes formal education (e.g. high school or university), licences and certificates, professional development, and other knowledge on specific topics and issues.

Personal Strengths are the qualities or characteristics inherent in the individual that are not necessarily a requirement of employment but which contribute to occupational success and satisfaction. Examples include a sense of humour, passion for the work, and knowledge of self/self-awareness.

PATHS believes these themes are essential components of our members' work and this project serves to capture the essence of the work being done across the province. Recently, the task of creating a profile, hiring guide, tools, and a job description has been completed. Once presented to the PATHS board of directors, the focus will shift to begin looking at emergent training needs.

Other educational endeavors at PATHS include domestic violence education for RCMP cadets, *Sharing Our Knowledge* workshops focused on Aboriginal culture training for shelter staff, PATHS' member education related to information from the *Origins of Violence: Strategies for Change* project, and the investigation into the use of online training for PATHS' members. ☘



*Kim Fellner*

## Alberta Update: *Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence*



by Lana Wells



Before being appointed The Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, **Lana Wells** was a member of the senior leadership team at the United Way of Calgary and Area, where she led the community investments and collaborations division and the public policy and government relations portfolio. Her areas of expertise include family and sexual violence, women's issues, children and youth services, social policy, social justice and social change, leadership and organizational change and the not for profit sector. Lana is currently the president of The Alex—an organization that provides health care delivery to at-risk, low-income, homeless, and immigrant Calgarians. Lana is the past president of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (2000-2002). In 2012, Lana became

a fellow at the School of Public Policy, University of Calgary where she is teaching on social policy in Canada. She is currently leading the MSW Leadership Program in the Faculty of Social Work, where she also teaches on leadership.

**I**n 2010, *Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence* ([www.preventdomesticviolence.ca](http://www.preventdomesticviolence.ca)) was initiated by **Lana Wells**, the Brenda Strafford Chair in the Prevention of Domestic Violence, in the Faculty of Social Work, at the University of Calgary. Via Shift, Dr. Wells' goal is to significantly reduce domestic violence in Alberta with a primary prevention approach to stop first-time victimization and perpetration through enhancing the capacity of policy makers, systems leaders, clinicians, service providers and the community at large. The project is committed to making research accessible and working collaboratively with a diverse range of stakeholders to inform and influence current and future domestic violence prevention efforts through primary prevention.

Shift has produced over 25 research reports (found at [www.preventdomesticviolence.ca](http://www.preventdomesticviolence.ca)) spanning content areas as diverse as home visitation programs; alcohol control strategies; promoting and building healthy youth strategies; approaches to prevent sexual violence; the cost of domestic violence in Alberta; engaging men and boys in violence prevention; evidence-based policies to prevent domestic violence; and more. Over the same period, the project cultivated strategic relationships with a wide range of stakeholders from government, non-profit organizations, education, research networks and citizen groups in order to build the social infrastructure needed to create and sustain change at multiple levels.

In 2012, Shift completed an extensive policy review outlining six key areas in which policy and legislation could be used as a tool to prevent domestic violence in Alberta (<http://preventdomesticviolence.ca/research/how-public-policy-and-legislation-can-support-prevention-domestic-violence-alberta>). The report, *How Public Policy and Legislation can support the Prevention of Domestic Violence in Alberta* has over 50 recommendations for specific, evidence-informed

program and policy amendments and initiatives to enhance the province's existing family-violence strategy in areas ranging from prevention of childhood exposure to violence in the home to improving school age children's healthy relationships to engaging men and fathers in family violence prevention.

In April 2012, Shift entered into a partnership with the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health Centre for Prevention Science, the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Human Services, United Way of Calgary and Area and the City of Calgary's Family & Community Support Services to create a robust, multi-pronged strategy aimed at cultivating healthy relationship skills in young people throughout Alberta. The strategy includes school- and community-based programming, strategic coordination, and capacity development for both service providers and teachers. This approach is testing the alignment and synergies of systems, policy makers, practitioners and academics to create change at scale.

Other important work included support of the November 29, 2013, release at the University of Calgary of the new provincial government's *Family Violence Hurts Everyone: A framework to End Family Violence in Alberta*. This policy framework will direct new investments, policy and legislative changes over the next five to ten years. This framework makes the connection of how poverty, gender inequality, racism, child sexual abuse and maltreatment, homophobia, violence against women, affordable housing, addictions, and mental health intersect and contribute to family violence. The framework also includes several cross ministry and community priorities that will significantly reduce and prevent family violence. For a copy of the new framework please see <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/family-violence-hurts-everyone.pdf>. ☘

**IPV response... cont'd from Page 1**

of the small population base, the large expanse of sparsely-inhabited wilderness, and the lack of services and resources makes remoteness a theme particular to the NWT.



We also added a second cartographer/geographer, **Joe Piwawa**, who along with Paul Hackett and their students enhanced earlier maps and created two additional maps based on NWT databases. One of these maps demonstrates spatially the distance from each of the communities to Yellowknife—where a trip can take 25 to 120 hours—and differentiates seasonal travel in winter from summer. Ice roads across the NWT lessen the travel time required to access services for victims of IPV. The second map used the NWT Coroner's report of ten years of homicides. Since our study initiated in 2011, there have been three additional homicides.

**Transportation**

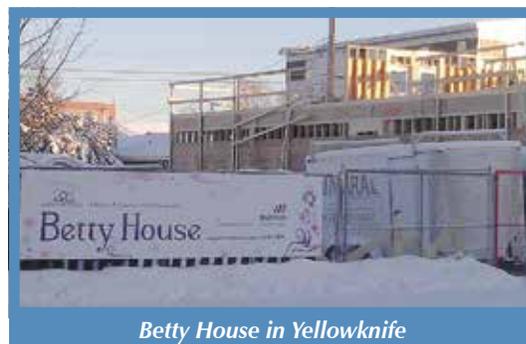
Transportation out of remote communities is sometimes limited by weather, and by spring break-up and fall freeze-up, so access can be denied. High winds on open waters makes travel by boat dangerous. Scheduled flight times are inconsistent due to dependence on the weather.

**Climate**

The climate in the Arctic is a formidable aspect of remoteness. One participant stated *"You have to think twice before you run out. Some people do but most people say [you] can't run, so [you] will just have to stay for the climate alone...whereas down south it is at least warm, you could at least run outside and go to your neighbour. But even if it is your neighbour that is 100 yards away, and you are not properly clothed or have the time to get properly clothed."*

**Poorly Resourced**

Of the 33 communities, one-third does not have RCMP in the community, and almost 80% do not have Victim Services. As previously stated, there are only five shelters in the North and are mostly in the larger centres (there is one in Tuktoyuktuk). The largest shelter has only 12 beds. The Yellowknife shelter is considered the main entry for the vast majority of women in the NWT and when needed, is also accessed by women from Nunavut. These shelters are not consistently open because of funding and staffing availability—two of the five shelters close if there is no one staying and at those times. One of the participants described their community responsiveness in this way:



*Betty House in Yellowknife*

*"There is no local victim services committee or liaison or anything like that. We have to always put them in touch with somebody outside of the community and the follow-up on that is very sporadic and it could take weeks before the outreach person from another community has an opportunity to even speak to people in this community. In many cases, most people that we're dealing with here don't have a home phone, so home visits would be required by the victim services people and without somebody local, it just doesn't happen."*

**Poverty**

With little to no employment in these remote communities unemployed women rely on their partner for income or even just to get wood for the fire. Communication issues arise because women cannot access telephones to get help. As well, there are very few communities where cell phones operate. Furthermore, the RCMP has a centralized telephone service and there can be delays in reaching the police. One participant said, *"A lot of them [community women] don't have phones. You know, how do they call for help? They run out their doors and run to their neighbour who has a phone or they try to hide in somebody's house until they can call the RCMP."*

**History of Colonialism**

The intergenerational impact of residential schools permeates the data in terms of its interrelationship with IPV, and there is a connection to the overarching theme of remoteness. In a sense, this aspect of being sent away

*IPV response... cont'd on Page 7*

## Announcements, Conferences and Events



**February 19, 2014 - 5th Annual Fab Fem Fundraiser** in support of the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre, at the West End Cultural Centre in Winnipeg, MB. The evening opens with young musician Sydney Kurbis and features speaker Kal Barteski, and singer/songwriter Sol James. Tickets are available by calling (204) 477-1123.



International  
Women's Day

**March 8, 2014 - International Women's Day 2014: Inspiring Change.** This year's theme for [internationalwomensday.com](http://internationalwomensday.com) global hub encourages advocacy for women's advancement everywhere in every way. It calls for challenging the status quo for women's equality and vigilance inspiring positive change. For events in your area refer to [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com).

**April 22 - 24, 2014 - 2014 International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Trafficking** is presented by End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) and will take place in Seattle, Washington, USA. This conference consistently brings together law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, victim advocates, judges, parole and probation officers, rape crisis workers, medical personnel, faith community members, educators and others in this three day conference highlighting promising practices and emerging issues in sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking. Register by February 28, 2014, and save \$50 off the full conference fee. For information or to register online refer to [www.evawintl.org](http://www.evawintl.org).

**Klinic's Evolve Program:** As part of it's contribution to Family Violence Prevention month in Manitoba, Klinic's Evolve Program developed a pamphlet titled **Are you Getting Enough?**. The intention behind this pamphlet was to invite people to consider the state and health of their relationship and whether enough of their needs were being met within the context of their relationships. The pamphlet includes three simple self assessment tools, *Knowing Your Needs*, a *Relationship Checkup* and finally a *Domestic Violence Questionnaire*. To download a copy of *Are You Getting Enough?* visit [www.klinic.mb.ca](http://www.klinic.mb.ca). Evolve is a family violence prevention program that provides individual and group counselling to women who have been abused in an intimate relationship and to men who have behaved abusively in an intimate relationship.

### IPV response... cont'd from Page 6

continues, albeit for an immediate need of safety for women and their children. The impact of residential schools within the shelter system lives on as described by this participant:

*"So in the smaller communities, and I could understand this myself because I grew up in them...we had to make do with what we had in the home and the majority of them were living off the country food, like the fish, caribou. You know, prepared in different ways in the year. Like rabbits geese, ducks...So when they do come to the shelter, some of them [Aboriginal women] are not used to having veggies like broccoli, cauliflower, carrots. Because a lot of them don't eat like that at home. And not only that, those [community people] that came from residential school were forced to eat whatever was given to them. And I think the hardest part for a lot of people up here is that they're so...their trust is very low, especially [when] coming from an abusive relationship."*

To conclude, remoteness contributes to an interdependent and closely related (often by marriage or kinship) people bound in small communities. This makes for a complex community problem. When you consider the experience of IPV as it transpires in a condition of remoteness, the vulnerability of women becomes apparent. Anonymity and privacy are mostly impossible for IPV victims and perpetrators if a community is named in a study. This becomes salient for researchers. Safety and security are critical when jeopardized but precarious to attain because communities are hindered by remoteness as experienced by women today. Remoteness creates a catch-22 whereby the context "locks them [victims, perpetrators, care providers] in" without viable resources and violence itself becomes more lethal and fatal, as there is "nowhere to go" and no hope for change, so the community desensitizes by accepting and normalizing IPV. ☹

\*References available upon request.

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### What's Happening at Prairieaction Foundation

In December 2013, PAF held our Annual General Meeting, where we elected **Rod McKendrick** as Chair, **Lisa Broda** as Vice-Chair, **Marlene Bertrand C.M.** as Secretary, and **Nicole Lang** as Treasurer.

The remainder of the Board consists of:

- **Laura Hughes** – Alberta
- **Cynthia Brick** – Manitoba
- **Teri Posyniak** – Alberta
- **Heather Salloum** – Saskatchewan

**Kathy Ogryzlo**, who has spent many years on the Board and served in every position including the Chair of the Foundation, will be stepping away from the Board and will be taking on the role of Administrative Director for the Foundation. We wish to thank her for her dedication on the Prairieaction Foundation Board and to all the work she does. We also look forward to working closely with her in her new role.

Our new mailing address as of January 31, 2014, is:

31250 Woodland Way  
Calgary, Alberta T3R 1G5

Further details are available at [www.prairieactionfoundation.ca](http://www.prairieactionfoundation.ca). ☞

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*~ Dr. Jane Urşel ~  
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