OVERCOMING THE BACKLASH: TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND OPPRESSION

Exploring Gender-based Analysis In The Context Of Violence Against Women

A Resource Kit For Community Agencies

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Dedication

Many of us do this work in memory of those no longer with us. We long to make a difference and in so doing, we continue to honour all women who have lost their lives at the hands of their intimate male partners. Most especially we dedicate this work to

GILLIAN MARY HADLEY

OCTOBER 12, 1964 - JUNE 20, 2000

We learned about her death and then we learned about her life. Gillian`s struggles to find safety for herself and her children symbolize the obstacles which still have to be overcome to ensure safety and security for all women and children. She taught us that one person`s life can make a profound difference. We dedicate this work in her memory and to all of the women, their children, family members, and friends who have lost their lives in similar horrific circumstances.

And on a more personal note, I would like to honour the memory of
my sister, my mentor, my hero, my best friend

PATRICIA LEE SINCLAIR-FAULKNER, MA, R.S.W.

JANUARY 2, 1947 – FEBRUARY 22, 2002

Courage grows, just begin…

Women and Children Murdered Since June 1995

The following list includes 163 women, 21 children and 10 family and friends murdered since June 1995. This is a partial list taken only from major media reports. Research has indicated that, on average, as many as 37 women a year are murdered by intimate partners in Ontario.*

Victoria Alty. Mississauga. Victoria died of massive internal injuries after she was kicked and punched. Her husband was charged with second-degree murder. (June 1995)

Carmine Jeannot, 43, and **Josiane Jeannot**, 12. Gatineau. Joseph Jeannot, described by neighbours as a soft-spoken gentleman, shot his wife and daughter to death in their beds before fatally shooting himself. (June 1995)

Kamlesh Sodhi, 39, mother of two children. Brampton. Kamlesh was found thrown on the side of a rural road in Halton Hills, Ontario. Her husband was charged with first-degree murder. (July 1995)

Marcia Hylton, 38, mother of five children. North York. Stabbed to death in front of her two youngest children. Her 5-year-old son was injured trying to protect her from the attack. Her ex-partner, father of one of the children, then jumped to his death off her balcony. (July 1995)

Alayne Bryk, 26. Hamilton. Shot to death by her estranged husband, who then shot himself. Family and friends said they thought the couple were 'reconciling'. (August 1995)

Donna Allison Currier-Burns, 32, mother of two children. Lansdowne. Police found Donna inside her home and had not determined the exact cause of death. Donna's common-law husband, Christopher Parmar, was charged with second-degree murder. (September 1995)

Maryanne Matesic, 47. Hamilton. Maryanne had left her abusive husband, but had returned to the marital home, accompanied by her adult son, to collect her belongings. Her husband shot her to death. Her son grabbed the gun and shot his father. He was charged with second-degree murder. (October 1995)

Georgina Liu, 22. Markham. Georgina was stalked and then beaten to death and dumped in a marshy area off Highway 401. She was studying to become an early childhood educator. Roderick Ballentino Brown was charged with first-degree murder after attempting to shoot himself in front of police. (October 1995)

Janie Marie Maxwell, 33, mother of one. Mississauga. Janie was beaten and kicked to death in an attack that went on for 20 minutes after an argument about a phone call she received from another man. Paul Anthony Beard was

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* Statistics are compiled from two major reports on Intimate Femicide in Ontario. Written by Maria Crawford and Dr. Rosemary Gartner, *Intimate Femicide: Women Killing in Ontario 1974-1990.* An update was completed in 1995 to include those years from 1990 to 1994. Reports are available through Education Wife Assault at www.womanabuseprevention.com. The Coronor`s Office of Ontario, estimates another thirty- one women were murdered from Jan.1995 to May, 1995 and including the figures gathered from the media reports from June 1995 to December, 2003, the total number of women murdered by their male partners in Ontario over the last thirty years is 1,110. This is a conservative estimate given the difficulties in documentation and does not include the children, family members and friends that are murdered by the batterer as well.

convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison. During sentencing, Judge John D. Smith described Beard as a man not known to be 'a particularly violent man, but he has a problem with alcohol'. (November 1995)

Vanessa Ritchie, 24, and her two children, **Tod**, 7 and **Fatima**, 16 months. Ottawa. Vanessa, Tod and Fatima were shot to death by her husband. He then killed himself. (December 1995)

Donna Barr, 43, mother of three. Perth. Donna and a male friend were shot to death by Donna's ex-husband, Kenneth H. Barr, who killed himself after the murders. Donna had been assaulted and threatened numerous times by Barr, but he received only a suspended sentence and an order to turn in his 20 guns. Neighbours described Kenneth Barr as 'a very nice person and the best neighbour'. (January 1996)

Paula Joy Hill, 31, mother of one. Brantford. Stabbed to death in a motel room where she had checked in with her son. Her husband, Paul Frederick Hill, is charged with first degree murder. (April 1996)

Stella McNicol, 40. Scarborough. Stella was found dead in her home by police. Her boyfriend, Thomas Daniel Brenna, was charged with second degree murder. (July 1996)

Bibi Hajra Alli, 37, mother of two. Bibi died of head injuries from a blunt instrument. Divorce papers had been served on her husband just days before the murder. Bibi had been separated from her husband for about two months. Neighbours were shocked, saying: 'They were very nice – a calm family'. Mohamed Rafeek Alli was charged. (July 1996)

Marsha Ottey, 19, and **Tami Ottey,** 16. Toronto. Marsha and Tami were stabbed and slashed to death in the basement of their home. Marsha had broken up with her boyfriend eight or nine months before the murders. Her ex-boyfriend was described by acquaintances as 'obsessive'. After an extensive search, Rohan Alonzo Ranger, Marsha's ex-boyfriend, and Adrian Mathias Kinkead, were found and charged with two counts of first degree murder. (August 1995)

Juliet Reynolds, 28, mother of two. Scarborough. Juliet was slashed and stabbed to death in front of her six-year-old daughter and baby son while waiting for an elevator in their apartment building. Adrian Daniel, her estranged husband, was charged with first-degree murder. (May 1996)

Maria Sanchez, 33, mother of three. North York. Maria was slashed and stabbed to death in her apartment by an assailant waiting there for her. Maria had told police she feared for her life two weeks before the murder. Her former boyfriend, Salvador Valera-Landrian, was out on bail on charges of assaulting her. He has been charged with first-degree murder. (February 1996)

Shelley Morgan, 35, mother of one. Aurora. Shelley was battered to death in her home. Stewart Radford, Shelley's common-law husband, was charged with second-degree murder. (July 1996)

Marilyn Woodland, 54, mother of one. Brampton. Marilyn was found stabbed and beaten to death in her home. Her husband, Keith Woodland, has been charged with murder. Family members described the couple as 'very close'. (September 1996)

Fran Piccolo, 36, **Jason Piccolo**, 9, **Alisha Piccolo**, 7. Stoney Creek. Fran and her two children were stabbed to death in their home. Shane Allan Mulcahy, who had moved in with Fran and her children after she and her husband separated, has been charged with three counts of first degree murder. (September 1996)

Arlene May, 39, mother of five. Collingwood. Arlene was shot after three of her children escaped from their home where they and their mother were being held. Randy Iles, Arlene's ex-boyfriend, who had been charged with assaulting Arlene more than once, but was out on bail under a restraining order, was charged with first-degree murder. Arlene's murder was the starting point of a 'super inquest' into domestic murders of women in Ontario. (March 1996)

Isabelle Holland, 50. Etobicoke. Isabelle was beaten to death after being stalked and assaulted on more than one occasion. Her ex-partner, separated from Isabelle for approximately two months, drove away in her car and was later found dead of apparent suicide. (March 1996)

Janice Lowery. Barrie. Janice was found strangled to death in a country field near her home. Her husband has been charged. (May 1996)

Carol Ann Leach. Kilworthy. Carol was found stabbed to death just hours after police attended a 'disturbance'. A police chase resulted in charging of her husband several hours later. Her husband was out on bail following an assault on Carol Ann the week before her death. (March 1996)

Jan Marshall, 40. Alcona. Jan was found by police after a canoeing incident in which her husband told police their canoe capsized during a canoeing competition and only he was able to make it to shore. Winston Malcom has been charged with first-degree murder. (April 1996)

Stella Burdo, 40. Toronto. Stella was stabbed to death in her Ontario Housing townhouse while a friend watched helplessly. Her sister wanted everyone to know that Stella had been trying to get out of the townhouse she was living in. 'I want it to be said that Ontario Housing is not that much of help when someone is in a crisis', she said, according to a Toronto Star article of June 29, 1996. (June 1996)

Carol Butler, 45. Croton. Carol was shot to death by her common-law husband, James Logan, with a gun returned to him by police after an earlier weapons charge against him, laid after a domestic call by police to their home, was withdrawn. Logan had also threatened to shoot Carol after a previous break-up. He committed suicide at the scene of the murder. Police described it as the 'perfect example of domestic violence' but no one could explain why weapons charges had been dropped. (June 1996)

Gloria Jean Morden. Gore Bay. Gloria Jean was shot to death by her ex-partner, who also killed his adoptive parents at the same time. (August 1996)

Jasmine Vanscoy, 14. St. Catharines. Jamine was shot in her home with a gun stolen from a gun shop several years earlier. Jasmine had just had her picture taken in her new high school uniform. A 17-year-old youth has been charged with second-degree murder. (September 1996)

Patricia Abbott, 40, mother of one. Fergus. Patricia was shot several times in the head at her home. Her estranged husband, Gordon Ray Abbott, has been charged with first-degree murder. (October 1996)

Natalie Katherine Pawluch, 42, mother of one. Mississauga. Natalie was shot to death by her husband less than 24 hours after he was ordered to stay away from her. Henry Andrew Pawluch then shot himself (November 1996)

Danusia Nicolak, 68. North York. (November 1996)

Cheryl Hohner, 31, mother of one and pregnant with her second child. Cheryl was murder on Boxing Day, three weeks before she was to give birth. Her common-law partner, Alfred Scott, was charged with second-degree murder. (December 1996)

Margaret West, 66, mother of three. Pointe au Baril. Margaret was shot to death along with a male friend by her estranged husband, who then killed himself. (April 1997)

Stephanie Tanaskow, 36, mother of two children. Etobicoke. Slashed to death at her mother's apartment. She had been charged by police the night before when she went to the police station to ask that a charge be laid against her husband. Her partner, Alex Tanaskow, was charged with first-degree murder. (April 1997)

Valentina Mechko, 57, mother of two children. Toronto. Stabbed to death on her way home from an English language class. She had a restraining order on her ex-husband, who was charged with first-degree murder. (April 1997)

Helen Kirec, 36, and her four children, **Ludvik**, 15, **Christopher**, 14, **Suzy**, 12 and **Nancy**, 11. Orangeville. Shot to death. The children were on an access visit with father after separation, and Helen had gone to pick them up. Her, ex-partner, Ludvik Kirec, also set fire to the house and then shot himself (April 1997)

Kerry Anderson, 33. Richmond Hill. Kerry's husband was charged with murder two years after her death, first believed to be suicide. Robert Anderson was charged with second-degree murder. (April 1997)

Nevenko (Nancy) Cindric, 44, and two of her children, **Josip**, 17, and **Kristina**, 12. Toronto. Janko Cindric killed himself after shooting them. (July 1997)

Nabella Ullah, 28, and her son **Ahsan**, 3. Brampton. Found in freezer. Cause of death not reported. Zafar Ullah was charged with two counts of first-degree murder. (July 1997)

Thi Lam Pham, 28, mother of two children, 2 and 4. Toronto. She was stabbed to death. Duy Linh Vu was charged with first-degree murder. (July 1997)

Betty Jo Scott, 20. Port Colbourne. (August 1997)

Myrna Lelina, 39, mother of three. North York. Stabbed to death at a friend's apartment. Her husband, Billy Lelina, was charged with second-degree murder. (September 1997)

Joyce Middleton. Fergus. Strangled to death by her ex-boyfriend. (September 1997)

Karrie Dulmage, 33. Oshawa. (September 1997)

Karen Parsons, 31, mother of two children. Oshawa. Karen was stabbed repeatedly at her apartment, where a man was later arrested and taken to hospital with minor wounds. Robert Jesus was charged with second-degree murder. (October 1997)

Fenny Campbell, 44. Sarnia. Fenny died of multiple injuries suffered when the Campbell vehicle struck the rear of a parked transport. An autopsy revealed she died of blunt trauma injuries. Her husband was charged with first-degree murder in October 1998. (January 1998)

Mary Lou Hyjeck 37. Windsor. Mary Lou died of asphyxiation. Her husband, Paul Hyjeck, was charged with second-degree murder. (January 1998)

Brenda Swartz, 50, mother of one child. Woodstock. Brenda died of multiple stab wounds. Her estranged husband, Kenneth, was charged with first-degree murder. (February 1998)

Jessica Romano, 45, mother of one teenaged son. Toronto. Jessica's bloodstained body was found in her car. Her boyfriend jumped to his death from the Bloor Viaduct in Toronto hours after her body was found. (February 1998)

Yathra Jayaweera, 44. Mississauga. Yathra's body was found in her apartment. A warrant was issued for a 46-year-old man. Police did not release a cause of death. (March 1998)

Maria Klymchuk, 36, mother of two pre-school children. Caledon. Maria's body was found inside of her garage. Her husband has been charged with first-degree murder. (April 1998)

Joan St. Jean, 53. Kanata. Joan, who was a woman with a disability, was smothered to death by her boyfriend in her home. Her boyfriend killed himself. (April 1999)

Aimee Cunningham, 33. Scarborough. Aimee died from slashes to her neck in her home. Her husband, Paul Cunningham, jumped to his death from the Bloor Viaduct in Toronto. Ten years before, Paul Cunningham's brother had killed his wife and daughter and later committed suicide by drowning himself in Lake Ontario. (April 1998)

Donna Bartman, 39, mother of three. Owen Sound. Donna was shot twice in the chest. The next day, the body of her estranged husband was found in the bush behind their home. A neighbour commented: "It's not something you expect to find around here." (May 1998)

Jasvir Plaha, 30, mother of two pre-school children. Mississauga. Jasvir was found in her apartment dead of chest trauma. Her husband, Baljinder Plaha, was charged with second-degree murder. Neighbours were shocked, saying: "They seemed like such nice people. They always waved hello when they walked outside." (June 1998)

Sabrina Devittoris, 26. Woodbridge. Sabrina died of multiple stab wounds in an Oshawa motel. Her ex-boyfriend, Angelo Consiglio, was charged with first-degree murder after a three- hour stand-off with police. (June 1998)

Leslie Williams, 32. Niagara Falls. Leslie was found in her home dead of head injuries. Her husband's body was later pulled out of the Niagara River where he had jumped from the Horseshoe Falls. (July 1998)

Beverly Gillett. Scarborough. Beverly died from stab wounds to the neck. Her husband has been charged with second-degree murder. A neighbour rescued their 2-year-old granddaughter and carried her out of the house to safety. (July 1998)

Linda Vickery, 38, Toronto. Linda died of multiple stab wounds. Her body was found in the kitchen of her apartment. Police issued a warrant for her boyfriend. (August 1998)

Elizabeth Bodnar, 61. Mississauga. Elizabeth was found dead in her townhouse. She died of massive head injuries. Her 75-year-old male companion, Stephan Orban, was charged with second-degree murder. (August 1998)

Jennifer Copithorn, 24. Bowmanville. Jennifer was ambushed and stabbed to death in front of her co-workers on her way to work. Her former boyfriend, Robert Appleton, was charged with first-degree murder. (August 1998)

Anna Pietras, 38, mother of one. Etobicoke. Anna disappeared after leaving for work. Her body has not been found. Her estranged husband was later found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. (September 1998)

Barbara Teske, 38, mother of two. Hawkesbury. The remains of Barbara's body were found in a ditch on a rural road not far from her home. Her husband, Peter Teske, was charged with second-degree murder. (September 1998)

Mitzi MacDougall, 27. Red Lake. Mitzi was drowned in the bathtub of her home. Her husband, Kenneth J. MacDougall, was charged with first-degree murder. (September 1998)

Micheline Cuerrier, 25. Wakefield. Micheline was slashed to death as she was on her way to work. Her ex-boyfriend is charged with first-degree murder. (October 1998)

Kathleen Hart, 35, mother of one. Toronto. Kathleen was beaten to death in an alley in the financial district of Toronto. Her companion, Martin Blackwind, was charged with second-degree murder. The couple was homeless. (November 1998)

Mandana Rastan, 43, mother of two. Richmond Hill. Mandana was strangled in her home, where police also found her husband with a self-inflicted stab wound to the chest. Medhi Merkhandan was charged with first-degree murder. (December 1998)

Janet Anita Reynolds, 31. Scarborough. Janet was found shot to death in her apartment. Her boyfriend, Steven Morrison, was charged with second-degree murder. (January 1999)

Brenda Chillingworth, 38, mother of two. Lucan. Brenda was found shot to death outside a home north of London. A man found dead nearby was not identified. Police believed the deaths were a murder-suicide. (January 1999)

Betty Higgins, 69. Niagara Falls. Betty was severely beaten and died later in hospital. Her partner, Govril Durciul, was charged with second-degree murder. (January 1999)

Elena Nusca, 50. Hamilton. Elena was stabbed to death in her home. Her husband, Mario Nusca, was charged with second-degree murder. (February 1999)

Shirley Taylor, 36. Sudbury. Shirley died from loss of blood as a result of a cut artery in her neck. Her common-law partner, David John Saunders, was charged with second-degree murder. (February 1999)

Renate Marie Steinhoefer, 66. Manitoulin Island. Renate was shot to death. Her husband, Mathias Steinhoefer, was charged with first-degree murder. (February 1999)

Maria Wong, 44. Markham. Maria was found stabbed to death in the garage of her home. Her husband, Shu Kwan Wong, was charged with the crime in August 1999. Police allege he hired several people to carry out the murder. (February 1999)

Heather Burton, 43. Bond Head. Heather was shot to death. Her husband, Bill Burton, then killed himself. (March 1999)

Sandra Quigley, 32. Scarborough. Sandra was found dead of asphyxia in her apartment. Anton Franz Lorenz was convicted of second-degree murder. (March 1999)

Melissa Pajkowski, 21. Thornhill. Melissa's body was found in a van after a traffic accident. She had been shot to death. Her ex-boyfriend, Peter Morrisey, was found in the van with self-inflicted wounds. (April 1999)

Sabrina and Nassima Benkartoussa, 34 and 37. Toronto. Sabrina and her sister were slashed to death in their high-rise apartment. Sabrina's estranged husband then jumped to his death. Sabrina was the mother of a seven-month-old baby. Her husband had recently been arrested for assault against Sabrina and was under a court order not to contact her. (April 1999)

Halina Deborah Abraham, 30, mother of one. Scarborough. Halina was found dead in a parking lot in a van with her ex-partner, Anthony Alfred Williams, who had committed suicide. Williams was on parole at the time. (April 1999)

Katherine Wellwood, 54. Cookstown. Katherine died of a gunshot wound. Her husband of 31 years, Geoffrey Allan Wellwood, was charged. (April 1999)

Abigail Manu-Acheampong, 31. Mississauga. Abigail was found dead in an apartment, but police would not identify the cause of death. Her husband, Charles "Stanley" Gray, was charged with second-degree murder. (May 1999)

Donna Theresa Young, 32. Hamilton. Donna was strangled to death in the dining room of her home. Her husband, Rodney James Young, was charged with first-degree murder. (June 1999)

Cindy Stevens, 35, mother of two. Niagara Falls. Cindy was found dead in her apartment by her teenaged son. Her common-law partner, James Anthony Hannah, was charged with first-degree murder. (June 1999)

Marjorie (Marg) Ellis-Byerly, 58. Pinewood. Marg was found dead of a gunshot wound. Her husband, Norman Byerly, was also found dead of a gunshot wound along with another man. Police believe it was a double murder-suicide. (August 1999)

Jenny Figueroa, 32. Toronto. Jenny's body was found stuffed in a suitcase and dumped off Highway 401 near Kingston. Her boyfriend, John Errol McLeod, has been charged with second-degree murder. (August 1999)

Christine Norcia, 22. Toronto. Christine was stabbed to death. Her boyfriend, Nicola Capparelli, was charged with first-degree murder. (October 1999)

Dori-Lynne Caroll, 30, mother of two. Thunder Bay. Dori-Lynne was found strangled in her home. Her two children were asleep in their bedroom at the time the body was found. Her estranged husband, Bryan Caroll, was later found in his truck, dead of a self-inflicted shotgun wound. (October 1999)

Robin Pope, early 50s. St. Catherines. Robin was stabbed to death on the front step of her home after a man tried to break in. Her ex-boyfriend, Michael Juanetty, was charged with first-degree murder. (October 1999)

Valerie Lucas, 23, mother of two children. Oshawa. Valerie was shot point-blank three times in a parking lot where she had gone to provide child access to her ex-partner. Robert Richard Bateman was charged with first-degree murder. He fled the scene with the children and later turned himself in. The children were found later in a hotel room and turned over to child welfare. (December 1999)

Xiaoyan (Shirley) Liu, 28. Toronto. The body of Xiaoyan was found slashed and stuffed into a suitcase. A warrant was issued for the arrest of her boyfriend, Chuan (Charley) Cai, who disappeared after the murder. (January 2000)

LaMura Meere, 75. Sarnia. LaMura was beaten to death. Her husband, Arthur Meere, was charged with second-degree murder. (January 2000)

Colleen Richardson Luciano, 33. Woodbridge. Colleen was stabbed to death and her body dumped in a dumpster. Her husband, Michael Luciano, was charged with second-degree murder. (January 2000)

Hemoutie Raghunauth, 28, mother of one child. Pickering. Hemoutie was poisoned on Mother’s Day. An autopsy showed that she was pregnant with her second child at the time. Her husband, Ganeshram Raghunauth, was charged with first-degree murder two months later. (May 2000)

Haraap (Jay) Bolla, 29. Mississauga. Harjaap was stabbed to death and then moved to a van, which was then set on fire. Balbir (Bobby) Singh, her ex-boyfriend, then killed himself in the van by fire. Singh had been charged with criminal harassment and was under a peace bond not to go near Haraap or her family. (June 2000)

Gillian Hadley, 35, mother of three children. Pickering. Gillian was shot to death in a desperate bid to save herself and her baby on a street in Pickering. Her ex-partner, Ralph Hadley, dragged her back into her house after neighbors took her child to safety, then killing her and himself. Ralph Hadley had breached several court orders and was out on bail on charges of assault, criminal harassment, and breaching orders. (June 2000)

Bohumila Luft, 27, and her four children, **Daniel**, 7, **Nicole**, 5, **Peter**, 3 and **David**, 3 months. Kitchener. Bohumila was stabbed to death. Her four children were then shot to death. Her husband, Vilem, then shot himself. (July 2000)

Laurie Lynn Vollmershausen, 35, mother of two children. Stratford. Laurie was stabbed to death. Her two children, aged 8 and 10, ran from the house to get help before the murder. Police found her partner, Joseph Theodore Willemsen, in the house with self-inflicted, but not life-threatening wounds. He was charged with first-degree murder. (July 2000)

Jennifer Zumach, 21, mother of one child. Orangeville. Jennifer was missing since early in 1999 but was not found until September 2000, when her head was discovered in a box on the back of her ex-partner's motorcycle. Her remains were later found buried. Her partner, James Vernon Randall, who reported Jennifer missing, was charged with first-degree murder. (January 1999)

Michele Chiesa, 34. Ottawa. Michele's body was found, bound and stabbed repeatedly, in the freezer of the bar where she worked. Her boyfriend, Michael Shott, was charged with first-degree murder. (September 2000)

Eva Papousek, 36. Mississauga. Eva was found dead in her apartment by police after her car, driven by her boyfriend, was involved in a road accident and police made a routine check on her residence. Janusz Rybak has been charged with first-degree murder. (October 2000)

Margaret Daw, 23. Burriss. Margaret's body was found in a residence after police were called in a shooting incident. Michael Tetu was arrested at the scene and charged with second-degree murder. (November 2000)

Christine Marie Rockery, 35, mother of four children. Brantford. Christine died of multiple stab wounds. Her husband, Paul Edward Rockery, was charged with first-degree murder. (November 2000)

Donna Pritlove, 46. Keswick. Donna was shot to death at her home. Her partner, David Woods, was charged with first-degree murder. (November 2000)

Annaluxumy Perrambalam, 73, mother of four children. Toronto. Annaluxumy was stabbed to death in the bedroom of her apartment. Her husband, Ponnabalam Perrambalam, was charged with second-degree murder. (January 2001)

Marcia Harmon, 42, and her daughter **Danielle**, 6. Pickering. Marcia and Danielle were stabbed to death in their home. Her husband, Montgomery Harmon, was arrested and charged with two counts of second-degree murder and taken to hospital with self-inflicted wounds. He later died at the hospital. (March 2001)

Desvinder "Jessie" Kaur, 26. Malton. Desvinder was trapped in a basement apartment and set on fire. She was then prevented from leaving the room and a neighbour was prevented from fighting the fire or rescuing her. Her ex-husband, Harbhajah Singh, was identified as the one who set the fire. He was also set ablaze during the fire and later died in hospital. (May 2001)

Shelley Lynn Cowell, 38. Woodstock. Shelley died in her home of multiple stab wounds to the upper body. Her husband, Christopher Cowell, who disappeared after the murder, has since been arrested and charged in her murder. (May 2001)

Ruth Smith, 71. Woodstock. Ruth was found dead in the bedroom of her home. Her husband of 50 years, Bruce Smith was found hanging in the garage. A note left at the scene led police to conclude that the deaths were a murder-suicide. Ruth's three daughters had expressed fears for their mother's safety and had tried to take steps to intervene. (May 2001)

Delphine Adamson, 62. Sudbury. Delphine's decomposing body was discovered by campers in a shallow gravesite. She died of blunt force trauma to the head and her identity was confirmed by dental records examination. Her husband, Michael Adamson, was charged with first-degree murder. (May, 2001)

Jeanine Perry, 20. Kingston. Jeanine was shot to death by her ex-boyfriend as she was on her way to work. Michael Shawn Martin then shot himself. Jeanine's father, who was had just dropped her off, witnessed his daughter's murder. (June 2001)

Andrea Schneider, 38, mother of three children. Ajax. Police discovered Andrea's body stuffed in the trunk of her car at a shopping centre. They believe she died in the garage of her home as a result of blunt force trauma to the head. Her common-law husband, James Stewart Poland, was charged with second-degree murder. (June 2001)

Nancy Pimentel, 26. Brampton. Nancy's decapitated and dismembered body was found in a garbage can near Cleveland. Her boyfriend, Gerald Lee Thompson, was arrested and charged with murder in Arizona. Nancy had met Thompson through the Internet and had moved with him to Ohio. (June 2001)

Lilawattee (Yvette) Budram, 41, mother of two children. Mississauga. Lilawattee's skeletal remains were discovered in a ditch in Flamborough in April 2001. She had been strangled and beaten with a blunt object. Her husband, Mohan Ramkissoon, was charged with first-degree murder. (June 2001)

Barbara Hedberg, 43. St. Mary's. Barbara was found shot to death in her home. Her husband, Joseph White, was also found in the home dead of self-inflicted a gunshot. (July 2001)

Linda Miller, 48, and **James Riordan**, 30. St. Mary's. Linda Miller was shot to death during a visit to her daughter by her estranged husband, who then turned the gun on himself. He had already shot to death the boyfriend of his daughter, who was screaming for help outside the home. Neighbours expressed shock and one was quoted as saying "he wasn't out there fighting or chasing her around with a frying pan." (July 2001)

Fatemeh Bakshei Tehrani, 86. North York. Fatemeh died of multiple stab wounds. Her husband, Hossein Ali Nakhostin Ansari, was charged with second-degree murder. (August 2001)

Fatima Hasan, 36, mother of two children. Scarborough. Fatima was killed while her children were moved to another room of the house. Police did not reveal the cause of death. Fatima had separated from her husband. Najib Anwar, the cousin of her ex-husband was charged with first-degree murder. (August 2001)

Deena Naw, 31. Ottawa. Deena was beaten to death in her apartment, after which her husband calmly called police to report the attack and wait for their arrival. Kolumbus Moo was charged with second-degree murder. (September 2001)

Fiona Davreux, 32, mother of two children. Hamilton. Fiona was taken to hospital after a 911 call by her husband to say she had collapsed at their home. She was declared dead on arrival and post-mortem exam showed that she had died of an insulin overdose, although she was not a diabetic. Two weeks later, after police had confronted her

husband, a surgeon at a local hospital, with suspicion that he had injected the insulin, Dr. Christopher Davreux was found dead of self-inflicted poisoning. A year later, after an exhaustive investigation, police determined that the case was a murder-suicide. (September 2001)

Tara Rutherford, 26, mother of one child. Mississauga. Tara was found dead in a bedroom of her home. Her common-law partner, Trevor Lawrence, was also found dead. Police did not reveal the cause of death, but indicated that it was a murder-suicide. Lawrence was under court order to stay away from Tara. (September 2001)

Heather Rapai, 47. Simcoe. Heather was beaten to death in the apartment she shared with her son. She was separated from her husband, Ervin Rapai, who was charged with first-degree murder. (September 2001)

Nicola Loughlin, 36. Scarborough. Police did not reveal the cause of death. Nicola's husband, James Richard Loughlin, was charged with second-degree murder. (September 2001)

Suzanne MacDonald, 32, mother of one child. Kitchener. Suzanne was shot three times and was found in a pool of blood at the door of her home. Her husband, Keith MacDonald, was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot in another room. The murder-suicide took place while Suzanne's 6-year-old daughter slept in her bedroom. (October, 2001)

Lubica Maca, 44, and **Desmond Perriera**, 56. Scarborough. Lubica died of multiple stab wounds to the chest and abdomen. Desmond Perriera, a family friend, was also stabbed to death before Jiri Maca also killed himself. The Maca's 22-year-old son was also injured in the attack. (October 2001)

Joyce Mattinson, 68. Scarborough. Joyce was found beaten to death in her home. Her husband, Bernard Mattinson, was found wandering in the area and was taken to hospital for observation. He was later charged with second-degree murder, but police were awaiting results of the medical background before officially arraigning him. He is reported to be an Alzheimer's patient. (November 2001)

Nuzhat Amiji, 23, and her brother **Naeem**, 20. Mississauga. Nuzhat was stabbed to death and her brother also stabbed after she refused proposals of marriage from a man. Mahaboobbhoy Adamjee was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no parole for 15 years. (November 2001)

Kathleen Schembri, 53. Orillia. Kathleen was found shot to death in a burned-out car in the driveway of her home. Police found her common-law partner, Michael Martin, in the home with self-inflicted gunshot wounds. He later died in hospital. According to media reports, acquaintances described Martin as a "good guy". His brother was reported to say, "This is a family thing and I would rather keep it that way." (December 2001)

Tamara Helen MacInnis, 31, mother of three children. Hamilton. Tamara was bludgeoned to death in her home. Her husband, Eric Campbell, was charged with second-degree murder. (December 2001)

Karen Grubb, 33, mother of three children. Walkerton. Karen's bloodied body was found by her brother-in-law in a tractor bucket on the farm where she lived during a neighbourhood barn-raising gathering. Cause of death was not reported. Her husband, Randy Grubb, was charged with first-degree murder. (January 2002)

Wadha Albadri, 29, mother of three children. Ottawa. Wadha was repeatedly stabbed in her apartment while her 19-month old baby was nearby. A friend dropping off Wadha's two older children later heard the baby crying and called police when she couldn't get an answer at the door. Hussain Hassan Abdullah, her estranged husband, was charged with first-degree murder. (January 2002)

Glenda LaSalle, 36. Barry's Bay. Glenda was found shot to death in her apartment, shortly after returning from work. Her partner of 12 years, Bryan Crogie, was charged with first-degree murder. He was described by a friend as "a real good guy". (February 2002)

Alexis Currie, 2. Scarborough. Alexis was stabbed to death during an child access visit with her father. Peter Currie was later charged with first-degree murder, abduction, possession of a weapon, and carrying a concealed weapon. He had recently been convicted of assault against his ex-partner. (March 2002)

Marisa Pasqualino, 36, mother of four children. Woodbridge. Police have not released the cause of death. Her husband, Cosmo Pasqualino, was charged with second-degree murder. (May 2002)

Shirley Snow, 44. Shirley was beaten and then run down with a van in a shopping mall parking lot. Her husband, Angus Snow, was charged with first-degree murder after police found him in Thunder Bay suffering from a drug overdose. (May 2002)

Jessica Nethery, 21. Sarnia. Jessica died of multiple stab wounds in an underground parking lot. Her ex-boyfriend, Jeremy Molitor, was charged with first-degree murder. (May 2002)

Maria Fitzulak, 26, mother of two children. Hanmer. Maria was found dead in the basement of her home. Her body showed signs of severe blunt force trauma. Her husband, Michael Gareau, was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at another location. (May 2002)

Mary Ellen Filer, 48, mother of two children. Port Stanley. Mary Ellen and her husband David Filer were found by their teenage son shot dead in a suspected murder-suicide. Family members claimed there had never been a history of domestic violence and that rumours of domestic abuse weren't true. (May 2002)

Shannon Cruse, 23, mother of one child, her daughter **Shaniya**, 6, and her parents **Mary and Donald Cruse**. Grimsby. Shannon was shot to death by her ex-boyfriend, Peter Kiss, who had crossed the border from the United States with a gun. Kiss then went to Shannon's home and shot to death her daughter and her parents before turning the gun on himself. (June 2002)

Libuse Vesely, 77. Toronto. Libuse was bludgeoned to death in her home. Her husband, Eugene Vesely, then hanged himself. Media reported that Eugene Vesely had been diagnosed with terminal cancer before the murder-suicide. (June 2002)

Patrycja Skibinska, 17. Mississauga. Patrycja's drowned and beaten body was discovered in a creek. Her boyfriend, Prabhjot Monty Singh, was charged with second-degree murder one month later. (July 2002)

Karen Drinkwalter, mother of two, and her friend, **Wes Goff**. Lindsay. Karen was shot to death while her two teenaged daughters slept. Wes Goff was later shot at his home nearby. Wayne Drinkwalter, Karen's estranged husband, was later killed in an accident after driving over a spike belt set up by police to capture him. Drinkwalter had been under conditions to stay away from Karen after previous charges of uttering death threats and two counts of assault. (July 2002)

Kelly Glover, 36, mother of two. Hamilton. Kelly drowned while on a camping trip to Bracebridge in **August of 2000**. Her husband, Richard James Glover, was charged with first-degree murder in **June of 2002** after the death was ruled a homicide. Richard Glover has launched defamation lawsuits against the police as a result of the police investigation. (August 2000)

Cheryl Topping, 19. Peterborough. Cheryl died of multiple stab wounds. Her body was found under a water tower by someone walking their dog. The body of her ex-boyfriend, Joel Phillips, was also found there. He died of a self-inflicted stab wound to the chest. (August 2002)

Robert Lawrence Mends, 2. St. Catharines. Robert was stabbed to death in the kitchen of his mother's home. His father, Lawrence Frank Mends, has been charged with the murder and attempted murder of Robert's mother Angela Glancy, his estranged partner. He was out on bail following a previous charge of assault and threatening to kill Angela. (August 2002)

Gail Bonita Blunt, 39, mother of two. Toronto. Gail died of a slashed throat and multiple stab wounds. She had left home to meet with her estranged husband at her office to discuss separation and custody agreements for their two children. Her estranged husband, Brian Blunt, was admitted to hospital with a drug overdose and was later charged with first-degree murder. (November 2002)

Ling Wang, 32. Toronto. Ling's body was discovered by police inside a car parked behind an apartment building in East York. She had been stabbed several times in the chest. Her former boyfriend, Facial Labidi, was charged with first-degree murder. Police reported that Ling had been in the process of moving out of the apartment she had shared with the accused. (November 2002)

Patricia Loyol, 48, and her daughter **Marissa**, 13. Toronto. The bodies of Patricia and her daughter Marissa were found in an advanced state of decomposition under a blanket in the bedroom of her home. Cause of death was not determined at the time of the creation of this list. Patricia had suffered a stroke 18 months before her death and had been using a wheelchair since. Family members described the family as a "very close-knit, loving family." Patricia's husband, Telford Loyal, has been charged with first-degree murder. (November 2002)

Tracy Lynn Sweet, 32. Picton. The body of Tracy Lynn was found in the rubble of a house fire when fire officials entered the burned building. She had been shot to death. Also found on the scene was the body of her common-law partner, Dennis Allan Daniels, also dead of a gunshot. Police believe that Daniels shot Tracy Lynn before setting the house on fire and turning the gun on himself. (November 2002)

Betty Card, 15. Marmora. A post mortem examination revealed that Betty died as a result of multiple stab wounds. Her body was discovered by police in a wooded area, metres from an elementary school. William Michael Barton has been charged with second-degree murder. Neighbours reported that Betty had been in a relationship with the accused. (November 2002)

Vera Islamkin, 56. Thornhill. Vera was shot to death in her home and was found by her adult son after he arrived home. Her husband, Peter Islamkin, was found hanging in the basement. Neighbours said that Islamkin had been suffering from depression and had threatened to kill his wife. (December 2002)

Carmela Bruni, mother of one child. Toronto. Carmela died in hospital after her husband called 911 on Christmas Day to report that she had suffered a head injury. Mel (Emilio) Bruni was charged with second-degree murder. (December 2002)

Victoria David, 52, mother of three. Mississauga. Victoria was strangled to death in her home. Her husband, Emmanuel David, then killed himself. One of Victoria's daughters called 911 after she couldn't get into her parents locked bedroom. (January 2003)

Laurel Price, 17. Scarborough. Laurel died of head injuries after her skull was fractured by a blow from an aluminum baseball bat. Her 17-year-old ex-boyfriend was charged with first-degree murder. (February 2003)

Marj Smrekar, 42, mother of two children. Mississauga. Marj was found suffering from severe trauma in the basement of her home and later died in hospital. Her estranged husband, Vernon Nichols, was later wounded after a police chase resulting in an accident in Eastern Ontario. He was charged with first-degree murder. A family member was quoted as saying that she "was trying to get a restraining order on him, but the courts said she didn't have any evidence". (June 2003)

Alisse Phillips (Brown), early 20's, mother of one child. Hamilton. A terrorized Hamilton woman was killed in her sister's apartment by an ex-convict boyfriend who then turned the gun on himself. He had just been released from prison and had made previous threats to harm her once he was released. (June 2003)

Natalie Gayle, 23, mother of two young children. Brantford. She was shot at a her townhouse in the early morning. Her former boyfriend, Anthony McPherson, and father of her second child was charged with her murder. (June 2003)

Gilda Schaper, 52. Coldwater. Gilda died as a result of blunt force trauma, but police would not give further details. Her husband, Hans Vogel, was charged with second-degree murder. (August 2003)

Judy Um, 32. Etobicoke. Judy was found stabbed to death in her apartment. Her husband, Seung Joon Um, was charged with second-degree murder. (August 2003)

Beverley Leclair, 52. Gloucester. Beverley was found dead in her back yard swimming pool and her death was thought at first to be caused by drowning. Police later charged her husband, Gilles Leclair, with second-degree murder after an autopsy determined that she had not drowned. (August 2003)

Kui Shang, 30. Toronto. Kui was found strangled in her apartment. She had come to Canada from China to pursue university studies. Her husband, Bo Li, was charged with second-degree murder. (August 2003)

Vanessa Bol, 17, mother of one. London. Vanessa was shot to death in her apartment after neighbours heard a loud voice and Vanessa crying, "my baby, my baby". Her ex-boyfriend, Emerson Dominguez, was charged with first-degree murder. (November 2003)

Mary Yeates, 57. Port Perry. Mary was found dead in her home by her elderly mother. Her husband was also found dead at the scene. Police referred to the deaths as possible murder-suicide. (December 2003).

Natalie Bobeika, 46, mother of one child. Natalie was stabbed to death in front of her 13-year-old son, who called police. She had been divorced from her husband for two years and was studying accounting in hopes of getting a job to support herself and her son. She had no relatives in Canada after coming from Russia; her son was placed in the care of friends. Her estranged husband, Iouri Bobeika, was charged with second-degree murder. (December 2003)

Zofia Bonder, 45, mother of three children. Mississauga. Zofia was stabbed to death as her children slept. Her daughter found her bleeding to death and called 911. Her husband, Maciej Bonder, was found in the home with minor self-inflicted wounds and charged. Police reported that there had been a history of problems in the relationship and police had been called to the home during the previous year. (December 2003)

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DURHAM'S HISTORY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Durham Region is developing a well-deserved reputation for its unique and innovative programming in addressing the needs of woman abuse survivors, their partners, and their children. I am frequently asked "What is it about Durham Region that they produce such excellent work?" My answer often describes a community of dedicated individuals who believe they have a responsibility to make a difference in the world and know they cannot do it alone. A strong sense of collective spirit lives here. So before describing the community initiative discussed in this resource kit, it is important to name earlier projects to assist the reader in linking together the collective accomplishments of Durham Region.

Durham Region is no stranger to grief. From the first moment the tragic news that Denise Penny, a 35-year-old woman, had been murdered in front of her 3-year-old daughter Sarah, the community gathered its resources and energies to deal with their sense of overwhelming loss. Staff of Auberge (a shelter for abused women and their children, now known as The Denise House in honour of their former resident) gathered together other workers from across the Province of Ontario and formed the *Women We Honour Action Committee*. This author had the privilege of facilitating those early meetings as workers came to terms with their grief and rage. In characteristic Durham Region fashion, they wanted to "do something" to make a difference. Their work gave birth to one of the most definitive studies on intimate femicide (referring to those women killed by their intimate partners) in the world.[1]

Durham Region did not stop its work here. Under the skilled guidance of The Violence Prevention Council, a community network committed to the prevention, detection, prosecution, and treatment of all forms of abuse against children, adults, and the elderly, Durham Region produced an exceptional document addressing the needs of woman abuse survivors and their children. This project became a five-year process culminating in a "work in progress" that explores both the creation of a community response to woman abuse and the development of a set of protocol guidelines for key systems' responses to woman abuse. The document, one of the first of its kind in Canada, has been recently updated and expanded. It has served as a pioneering model for protocol development across the country.[2]

In September 1997, in Durham Region, a Community Coalition formed and began a community dialogue regarding custody and access issues in situations where woman abuse was involved. Recognizing that recommendations for change must be grounded in the voice of experts, a steering committee was struck and with funding from Status of Women Canada, the Custody and Access project was launched. Thus began a three-year process of conducting focus group research with 52 women who had

[1] Written by Maria Crawford and Dr. Rosemary Gartner Intimate Femicide: Women Killing in Ontario 1974-1990. An update was completed in 1995 to include those years from 1990 to 1994. Reports are available through Education Wife Assault at www.womanabuseprevention.com.

[2] Written by Diane Mathes and Ruth Farquhar, D.M.A. Consultants. Creating a Community Response: Developing a Protocol for Abused Women and Their Families. www.durhamresponsetowomanabuse.com

survived woman abuse and had proceeded through the custody and access process. As part of this project, in March 1999, Steps for Change – a solution-focused working conference was held involving 225 professionals, Violence Against Women (VAW) advocates, and survivors. A number of working groups were struck and their efforts culminated in a report called *In The Centre Of The Storm – Durham Speaks Out: A Community Response to Custody and Access Issues Affecting Woman Abuse Survivors and Their Children.*[3]

The Custody and Access project addressed the civil law system and its available options for abuse survivors and their families, in much the same way as the criminal law system was challenged back in the late 1970s and early 1980s to become more effective in its response to woman abuse survivors and their families. Little had been done to challenge the civil law system as it related to woman abuse issues. The whole framework for the civil law system continues to be settlement-driven. It is predicated on the assumption that over 95% of all cases will settle before trial. Thus, getting a settlement becomes an important underlying value of the administration of justice. This philosophical climate is not conducive to creating safety for women and children confronted with historical and ongoing abuse.

That Durham Region had decided to take on such a daunting task is again rooted in the experience of its community members. Most notably, that community effort was inspired by the courage of a mother who sought justice for herself and her son Luke by seeking the family court's protection. The system's response was ill-equipped to deal with what the mother presented. Luke was subsequently murdered by his father on a first unsupervised visit in August 1997. The community was devastated. Community members of Durham Region have been driven to understand how the tragedy could have been averted. The *In The Centre Of The Storm* report reflects their efforts. The report was first presented in late October 1999 at the *International Conference On Children Exposed to Domestic Violence – Creating A Legacy Of Hope*, in Vancouver, BC. The final report was released in June 2000.

In a tragic twist of fate, the very day their report was to be launched at an evening celebration, Gillian Hadley, one of their community members and a young mother of three children, was brutally murdered at 9:30 am, on June 20, 2000, in the small Durham Region city of Pickering. The community was again traumatized. After the initial shock wore off, the steering committee decided to proceed with their launching of the report that evening, in part to take advantage of the large gathering of over 200 professionals, advocates, and survivors from the VAW community, to honour Gillian. The celebration of the launching of the project also became a celebration of Gillian's life, and a vigil was incorporated into the evening to mourn her death. This involved the lighting of a candle in her honour, which burned on a table beside a dozen roses presented in her memory. The evening thus became a blend of both sorrow and joy.

Victories continued to accumulate in Durham Region. Some of these include the opening of Luke's Place, a resource centre for abused women (and their advocates and

[3] Written by Deborah Sinclair M.S.W., June 2000. This can be viewed at the following website: www.durhamresponsetowomanabuse.com.

professionals) dealing with custody and access issues. Herizon House, a shelter founded in honour of Gillian Hadley, recently opened in the Ajax-Pickering area, thus increasing the number of beds available for abused women and their children in Durham Region. Skilled community experts and survivors collaborated with members of the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) to develop and deliver an enhanced five-day Domestic Violence Investigators Course. To date, approximately 180 senior officers have been trained, and the DRPS has committed to deliver 4 five-day courses per year, until their 700-plus member force has been fully trained in the area of domestic violence dynamics. In June 2001, at the *International Conference on Children Exposed to Domestic Violence* in London, Ontario, the Durham community was honoured for its work with the *Dare to Dream* award.

In October 2001, this author had the privilege of attending the Inquest into the deaths of Gillian and Ralph Hadley, both as an expert witness and as a consultant to the DRPS and other community partners who had standing at the Inquest. The five-member Jury heard 39 days of evidence from 60 witnesses over the course of a four-month period. They made 58 recommendations to the Office of the Chief Coroner addressing such issues as the response of the criminal justice system to domestic violence, the role of community support services, and housing and income support. The Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC) was able to take an active role in assisting the Office of the Chief Coroner and the members with standing to present their concerns before the Jury.

Current Initiative

This brings the reader to the present community initiative; a project entitled *Overcoming the Backlash: Telling the Truth about Power, Privilege, and Oppression; Exploring a Gender-Based Analysis in the Context of Violence Against Women; A Resource Kit For Community Agencies.* As demonstrated in the past, Durham Region continues to have an impressive track record of meeting challenges head on. In December 2000, following a lengthy community consultation process, the Violence Prevention Council and the Custody and Access Steering Committee, two active but historically separate community groups, decided to consolidate their resources and energies to become the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (Durham Region). At the first annual general meeting held in June 2001, their general membership adopted their vision, mission statement, mandate, and guiding principles.

Following this development, a local community group wrote an eloquent but opposing view to the VPCC's mission statement and guiding principles. They articulated a very different philosophical understanding of domestic violence, particularly violence against women. The essence of this group's philosophy was rooted in a gender-neutral analysis rather than in a gender-based analysis. Simply put, a gender-neutral analysis promotes the view that men are as likely to be victims of female violence as women are to be victims of male violence. Such a view opposes a feminist analysis that violence against women is historically rooted in women's inequality, and that domestic violence is about a misuse of power and control. This view appeared to be an emerging trend

across the province, and was reflected in much of the media coverage given to domestic violence issues.

The VPCC once again decided to be proactive in their response to this challenge and applied to Status of Women Canada for funding to research the emerging trends in the field that appeared to challenge the foundation of VAW work. A subcommittee of the VPCC, the Gender Advisory Committee (GAC), was struck to guide this project. They hired a part-time consultant and project coordinator, and together they identified five significant areas of backlash against the VAW movement. These are reflected in the following ways:

- devastating financial cuts to VAW services,
- a push to use gender-neutral language to describe issues that in reality are gender-specific, such as violence against women and children,
- proposed amendments to the Divorce Act that would elevate risks to the safety and security of abused women and their children and give abusers opportunities to utilize new harassment tools,
- an increase in dual arrests, which places battered women and their children at greater risk, and
- mainstream media that gives greater and greater voice to anti-feminist sentiment, which confuses the public and perpetuates dangerous myths (such as, “women are as violent as men”, “husband battering is as prevalent as wife battering”).

The project staff and GAC committee did an extensive literature review, scanned current media coverage, conducted two focus groups of survivors and service providers, facilitated a one-day provincial think-tank of 28 leaders in the VAW movement, and piloted this resource kit through two pilot agencies in the community to assess its usefulness in assisting service providers, supervisors, and managers to develop a gender-based analysis of woman abuse.

A project of this magnitude is rarely done singularly. It takes the minds, hearts, and hands of many to grapple with such complex issues. It takes a willingness to stay open and connected in the face of heated debate and differences of opinion. It takes courage, boldness, and tenacity to move forward in a system fraught with problems. It takes creative and brilliant minds to be able to envision a different way, and then fortitude to generate the resources to do it. It takes strength of character to face overwhelming grief and horror and to transform it into a healing path. It takes intellectual and moral integrity to face constant challenge to one’s work while still providing a high standard of service to countless survivors and their families, many of whom face high-risk dangers on a daily basis. These qualities have proven to be present throughout this community.

In addition to all of these qualities, a written document of this nature takes countless hours to research, write, review, edit, and then to reflect on and discuss these complexities, and ultimately produce and distribute. This would not have been remotely possible without the support, dedication, and combined efforts of many individuals and agencies. The names of all those who lent their time and expertise to this project cannot be identified individually,

as the list would be endless. Their efforts do not go unnoticed and are deeply appreciated.

However, I would like to acknowledge some exceptional people who devoted many hours of their volunteer time to participate in this project.

A special thank you to Karla Hartyl and Stella Ng, both of Status of Women Canada, for their unwavering support of this project. An important recognition also goes to Rita Benson, past board member of the VPCC, who generously devoted many hours to craft the original proposal for this project.

Past and current board members of the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council have extended their support throughout the course of this project in a myriad of ways. Members include: Carol Barkwell, Rita Benson, Tahmena Bokhari, Neil Bradley, Leigh-Anne Calhoun, Catherine Carney-White, Diane Cassidy, Judy Cavanaugh, Lynn Clarke, Penny Contreras, C.D., Darcy Heenan, Tom Hewitt, Margo Josey, Judy Kyle, Sandra McCormack, Mark Moorcroft, Keith O'Meara, Isabel Pargana, Sylvia Pivko, Eva Reti, Kate Schillings, Dawn Taylor, Joyce Thompson, Rosetta Springer, and Graham Wakefield.

Appreciation is also extended to the current members of the Gender Advisory committee – Sylvia Pivko, Judy Cavanaugh, Rosetta Springer, Tahmena Bokhari, Linda Jackson, and Mary McMillan – as well as to past members Marsha Sfeir and Penny Contreras.

Special thanks also go to our two project coordinators, Keri Semenko (past) and Rai Reece (current). We were fortunate to have the company of these two women, both of whom are Ph.D. candidates in the Women's Studies program at York University. Their enthusiasm, intellectual rigor, and clear commitment to an integrated analysis of VAW work assisted us enormously throughout the course of this project. They have left an indelible mark on all of us and we are truly blessed to have worked with them.

What an exceptional group of women! They met bi-weekly to discuss, challenge, struggle, and ultimately deal with complicated, and at times threatening, ideas that shake one's perception of the world to the very core. Little did they know what vast territory they were entering. Yet, each woman is to be commended for staying the course. It is to their credit that they were able to whole-heartedly embrace the critical feedback they received from the focus group members and the Provincial Think-Tank participants, and change the direction of the project midstream. They were challenged to face the limits of a single-lens analysis (gender-only) of woman abuse, and moved to incorporate a multi-lens analysis of woman abuse that integrates an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework. This resource kit is a reflection of the process and will continue to be a "work in progress".

I express sincere appreciation to my assistants Rosemary Clinton, T.A., and Val Sonstegard, who repeatedly went above and beyond the call of duty. Others who have volunteered with the writing, editing, and never-ending revisions include all members of the GAC, as well as Brenda Boswell-Simpson, Susan Harris, Sharon Aylsworth, Tom Faulkner, Lee and Ron Gold, Clara McDaniel, Angela Townsend, Michelle Landsberg, Colleen Pollreis, Gwen O`Reilly, Beth Jordan, Leanne Trafagander and Merrill Pierce. Special mention to Anna Goduco, Keith Marlowe, and Sylvia Pivko for their formatting expertise, to Richard

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Under the leadership of Sister Pat Grant at Catholic Family Services of Durham and Becky Wall, Programme Manager at Durham Region Health Department – (Healthy Babies Healthy Children), these agencies willingly agreed to pilot this resource kit. Feedback from their staff team members, particularly Leanne Traffagander, Angela Townsend, Fran Thompson, and Gayle Simpson, was extremely helpful.

Other writers on this project who contributed their own reflections on multiple oppression include Tahmena Bokhari, Rai Reece, Fran Odette, and Deborah Chansonneuve (Key Informant Interview). Mary McMillan contributed substantially to the literature review section, and Rosetta Springer particularly added to the discussions on marginalized and racialized women. Judy Cavanaugh kept us financially afloat and enriched our discussions with her wit and wisdom.

It is currently accepted that violence against women is one of the most urgent human rights issues of our time, yet paradoxically, women do not benefit from a level of resources that would reflect this urgency.[4] Even now, if it were not for people generously contributing their time and covering many of their own expenses, the scope of this project would not have been as substantive as it is. It is because of their deep commitment to ending violence against women that on a hot day in mid-July (a Friday, no less), 28 brilliant women came together to share their wisdom and expertise on matters raised in this report. It is the better for these efforts.

They include Nora Angeles, Nicole Barrett, Roma Beckles, Tahmena Bokhari, Andrée Cotê, Penny Contreras, Pam Cross, Carole Curtis, Esther Enyolu, Vivien Green, Susan Harris, Linda Jackson, Beth Jordan, Michelle Landsberg, Neuzath Leedham, Mary McMillan, Jane Monro, Beth Northover, Fran Odette, Gwen O'Reilly, Sylvia Pivko, Rai Reece, Darlene Ritchie, Marsha Sfeir, Uzma Shakir, Rosetta Spinger, and Barbara Williams.

I am privileged to be able to rely on this outstanding group of individuals and as always, they give generously of their time, wisdom, expertise, and friendship. I am keenly aware of their collective support.

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To all of the focus group participants, and in particular to Bonnie Stoutley (Woman Abuse Council of Toronto), Nicole Barrett (Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre), and C.D. (Violence Prevention Coordinating Council, Durham

[4] Amnesty International, Media Release, Nov. 25.2003

Region) for coordinating the focus group, we offer a special thank you for your participation in the project and for so generously volunteering your time, wisdom, strength, and courage. You inspire us to continue developing a world in which all of us can live and work with integrity and safety. We are grateful for your contributions, and though we can not name each of you individually, we would like to acknowledge your support to this project.

In any effort such as this, it is essential to have the backing from your community partners. We are appreciative of the support received from the following agencies. They include: Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre, Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, Catholic Family Services of Durham, Durham Family Services, Durham Regional Police Service, Durham Family Court Clinic, The Denise House, Durham Children's Aid Society, Crown Attorney's Office, Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Care Centre – Lakeridge Health, Oshawa Community Health Centre, Victim Witness Assistance Program (MAG), Durham Behaviour Management, YWCA, Rose of Durham, Bethseda House, Luke's Place, Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (Ontario) (MCIS), Skills Marketing and Recruitment Team (S.M.A.R.T.), and Durham Region Health Department (Healthy Babies Healthy Children).

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"When I dare to be powerful – to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."

Audre Lorde,
February 18, 1934 - November 17, 1992

Together, we have lived the truth of this statement. It has been an honour to work with each and every one of you.

Deborah Sinclair,

December 31, 2003

A FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This document requires a further acknowledgement that comes from the heart. It is from both the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (Durham Region) and the Gender Advisory Group that oversaw this project. We would like to collectively acknowledge Deborah Sinclair, the principal author and facilitator.

The magnitude of this project was not known at the outset, nor the personal and professional toll that it would take. This further acknowledgement cannot honour Deborah to the extent we feel she deserves. However, it is important to us to attempt to express in words the depth of our appreciation to her.

None of us are the same as we were at the start of this journey, and Deborah has borne the brunt of the struggle. We honor you Deborah, your incredible dedication, the way in which you gave and gave of yourself spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and even at times financially to this project and to our community. Your capacity to support and mentor others, your sincerity and genuine caring has touched us all. None of us will easily forget this moment.

You have been an incredible catalyst for the Durham community, and our accomplishments in seeking to improve our response to woman abuse and create a working safety net would never have occurred, if not for you. Even though you are not of the community, you are at the centre of the struggle and clearly a very special honorary member of Durham Region.

Thank you Deborah for keeping us in your heart and for making such a difference in the lives of women and children in our part of the world!

VPCC and GAC

December 31, 2003

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CORNERSTONE PRINCIPLES

The principles upon which this resource kit is based are:

1. Everyone has the right to live a life free of violence.
2. No one deserves to be abused and no one has the right to control another person.
3. Once violence starts, it will not stop spontaneously. Active intervention is required.
4. Violence against women is not the result of an argument that gets out of hand. It goes much beyond the normal tension that all couples in intimate relationship experience.
5. Understanding and naming the issues of power, privilege and control are fundamental to the task of ending violence against women.
6. Ending violence against women is everybody's business. The community has a right and a responsibility to get involved.
7. A comprehensive community approach is essential. No one worker, agency, or system can solve it alone. We must work together.
8. Prevention means addressing the root causes of violence against women, not just the symptoms. Education is a prerequisite to prevention.
9. Violence against women must be understood within an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework.

PREFACE

Gender-based analysis (GBA), sometimes referred to as gender mainstreaming or looking through a gender lens, is a fairly new concept in Canada and, as yet, has not been widely used. However, the idea of gender-based analysis has been in the international arena for more than 30 years. In 1975, in Mexico City, at the World Conference for International Women's Year, conference delegates began the process of developing national internal mechanisms for governments to advance women's equality rights. During the Decade for Women (1976-1985), the United Nations encouraged member countries to adopt this GBA initiative.

Canada played a leading role with respect to the adoption of the resolution in the United Nations General Assembly on December 20, 1993, declaring that "women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms" in all spheres of their lives. The General Assembly, recognizing the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity, and dignity of all human beings, defined the term 'violence against women' as meaning:

> Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.[5]

The United Nations estimates that between 20-50% of all women worldwide experience physical violence at the hands of their intimate partners (Kimmel, 2002). One of the major platforms for action adopted at the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 was the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls internationally. In response to this significant move, the Canadian government initiated a policy requiring all federal departments and agencies to conduct gender-based analysis on all future legislation and policies.

Status of Women Canada, one of the key government bodies responsible for promoting the integration of gender-equality perspectives into Canadian government policy development and decision making, recognizes that the Violence Against Women (VAW) movement and community-based agencies generally are unfamiliar with the term *gender-based analysis*, particularly at its grassroots level. In light of the current backlash and the erosion of VAW services, and in particular the trend toward adopting a gender-neutral language, it was thought that GBA could be a useful tool in challenging this development.

This document explores the phenomenon of gender–neutral language in order to demystify the strategies used by Backlash proponents. By receiving a means to challenge a gender-neutral analysis, allies in the VAW movement and community-based agencies will be empowered to rebuild and reclaim their movement. The challenge is to

[5] From *The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, 1993

name the problem accurately and not be silenced by the reaction. The mission is a monumental one – to reclaim expertise and reflect the truth about women's lives as seen, known, and understood on the front lines of the violence epidemic.

The conclusion reached in this document is that **a gender-neutral analysis** of woman abuse, which assumes a level playing field between men and women, does not aid equality but rather renders invisible the inequalities that exist between the genders, and that, for this reason, it **should be avoided in discourse concerning woman abuse**. Gender-neutral language has, in fact, encouraged and facilitated the current backlash against the gains made in the 1970s and 1980s toward eliminating woman abuse.

Furthermore, this document addresses the limits of a gender-based analysis in understanding the disproportionate impacts of woman abuse on racialized women, women with disabilities and Deaf women, immigrant and refugee women, lesbians, poor, older women, and geographically isolated women.

Even as this is being read, millions of abused and disadvantaged Canadian women can only long for the day when their basic Charter right to "security of the person" will become a reality.

As long as such disparities remain, efforts to work toward a better future for abused women must be grounded on theoretical constructs that truly reflect the complex reality of their lives.

One of the defining moments of the 20th century has been the relentless struggle for gender equality, led mostly by women, but supported by growing numbers of men. When this struggle finally succeeds – as it must – it will mark a great milestone in human progress. And along the way it will change most of today's premises for social, economic and political life.[6]

[6]UNDP, *The Human Development Report*, New York: Oxford University Press,1995.

BRIEF OVERVIEW[7]

This resource kit is composed of 12 sections.

In section 1, the **Introduction** provides the reader with a context for understanding a gender-based analysis while at the same time understanding that inclusivity necessitates that the VAW movement develops an integrated analysis of woman abuse that seeks to understand each woman **within her particular context**.

In section 2, **The Journey** reflects the power of the process of action research. During our research, service providers and survivors of woman abuse expressed to us an urgent need for an understanding of anti-racism and oppression to be a central part of any analysis concerning gender-based initiatives.

In section 3, **Understanding the Nature of Backlash** explores how gender-neutral language is used as a tool of the backlash, specifically as it is played out in the media.

In section 4, **A Literature Review of the Gender Symmetry Debate,** that is, *Are women as violent as men?*, helps the reader to critically assess the major assumptions underlying the backlash position. This is a key section as it will be useful to individuals and organizations whose work may be challenged by backlash proponents.

In section 5, **Two Examples of Current Backlash Trends** are highlighted – the proposed amendments to the Divorce Act and the increase in dual arrests.

In section 6, **Credible Statistics in the Lives of Women and Children** are provided. After a thorough review of many studies these statistics represent the most credible sources that workers and agencies can use to advance their work in the area of violence against women and children.

In section 7, **Reflections on Multiple Oppressions** is a series of compelling testimonies from four women offering their perspectives on Aboriginal people, Deaf women and women with disabilities, South Asian immigrant women, and the need to deconstruct whiteness and white privilege.

In section 8, **Kit-Resources,** agencies and organizations will find helpful tools to assist them in exploring and implementing gender-specific policies and best practices.

In section 9, **Key Articles for an Integrated Analysis for VAW Work,** seven articles have been chosen; one further develops collaboration between child welfare and VAW services and six explore various aspects of oppression including common elements, class, privilege, internalized dominance and strategies to disrupt oppressive behaviour.

In section 10, **The Appendices,** several resources that will advance knowledge of the field have been included: the power and control, equality and advocacy wheels, a poem on male privilege, two charts that trace the waves of feminist progress and backlash, and definitions of current terms.

In section 11, **Recommended Reading and Resources** provides the reader with key books, articles, websites and international instruments that will further their understanding of this issue.

[7] This Reource Kit will be updated periodically as time and funding permits. Comments and feedback on the usefulness of these materials are most welcome. Contact information is on page 8. We request that the Evaluation questionnaire on page 99 be completed and returned to the VPCC by December 1, 2004, if you wish to be included in the formal evaluation stage.

Finally, in section 12 of this kit, the reader is provided with what we believe is an extensive and comprehensive **Bibliography** on this subject matter.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE KIT

First of all don't be daunted by its length or content, rather take the time to familiarize yourself with its table of contents so that you can develop a sense of the overall. We guarantee that you will find useful information that will assist you in a myriad of ways, regardless of what stage you and your service/organization may be at.

What is this resource kit?

This resource kit is a reference tool to assist services/organizations in refining their analysis of woman abuse, specifically, and of violence against women, generally, within an integrated anti-racist, anti-oppression framework.

It is a reference tool for anyone wanting to understand the difference between and the implications of a gender-based or a gender-neutral analysis. It will help you to understand what is meant by "gender", "gender equality" and the imperative of incorporating a gender analysis within an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework.

It is a reference tool that can assist in supporting dialogue within and between services/organizations about values and philosophy in service delivery, policy development, and organizational norms and culture.

Why has it been developed?

The idea for this resource kit grew out of a host of individual and organizational experiences of backlash in our community. Repeatedly, and in multifaceted ways, specialized services for women, children, and their battering partners, built up over the last 30 years, were being challenged, co-opted, critiqued, undermined, and in some cases dismantled, in the current political climate. This resource kit was born out of our need to focus and understand what was happening to us. It provides a way in which we could develop resources and tools that would help empower us, assist us to reclaim our roots, and challenge the backlash of a gender-neutral analysis.

Who should use it?

If you are a frontline staff, a supervisor, manager, or administrator, this resource kit can be of assistance to you. If you work directly with women and children affected by violence or if you provide any human service to children, youth, and their families, then this resource kit may be of assistance to you. If you are engaged in research or program development and evaluation, or coordinate training and staff development, provide workshops in your community, or respond to media calls and requests, then this resource kit may be of assistance to you. If you are a student or a volunteer, then this resource kit may also be useful to you. If you are developing policies for your service or organization, then this resource kit may be of assistance to you. If you are

advocating for the improvement of the human condition in any of its facets, then this resource kit may be useful to you.

How might it be used?

The resource kit is organized to provide you with information through its literature review, examples of current trends, references, statistics, reflections, best practices, articles, definitions, and recommended readings.

This kit is designed to provide background information primarily. Ideally you might want to consult it as you move through policy and program development, in-service training, writing articles, developing and providing workshops, or responding to backlash both internally and externally to your service/organization.

This resource kit does not provide you with a set recipe to follow but rather a comprehensive theoretical backdrop through which specific experiences can be understood. You might find it useful to review specific sections from time to time, rather than working through the entire resource kit in any one sitting.

It brings together a whole mass of information and thinking about ways to reclaim expertise and reflect the truth about women's lives as seen, known, and understood on the front lines of the violence epidemic that we are all experiencing.

INTRODUCTION

This resource kit has been written for frontline activists, counsellors, supervisors, managers, policy makers, administrators, board members, and volunteers who commit their energies, expertise, and wisdom to developing strategies and services that focus on ending violence against women and children. The need for such a document exists because of the multi-faceted ways in which specialized services for women, children, and their battering partners, built up over the last 30 years, have been challenged, co-opted, critiqued, undermined, and in some cases dismantled, in the current political climate.

The goals of this document are as follows:

1. to identify the dangers inherent in using a gender-neutral analysis of woman abuse;
2. to expose the transparency of the arguments which are raised to fuel the current backlash;
3. to unearth the underlying assumptions on which those arguments are based;
4. to provide the reader with accurate information to challenge such arguments, and;
5. to make available background information that will deepen workers' analysis of woman abuse within an integrated anti-racist, anti-oppression framework, and, in so doing, enrich further dialogue in their homes, workplaces and communities.

This information will be presented in the form of a resource kit for workers and agencies to use in the service of refining their analysis of woman abuse.

One of the major contributions of feminist thought and analysis to the policy and practice of Violence Against Women work has been to identify men as the primary perpetrators of violence against women in intimate relationships and child sexual abuse.

In the 1970s, grassroots activists reframed the issue of violence against women and children by stating that the abuse of women and children was not a personal, domestic problem but rather a systemic and political one. Its etiology was not to be traced to individual women's or men's psychological/ emotional problems, but rather to the ways in which socially constructed gender roles reflect historically entrenched relations of male dominance and female subordination.

Dobash & Dobash (1992), two Scottish researchers well-known for articulating this conceptualization, found that the predominant pattern of violence between intimate partners is one of male violence directed at a female partner in the role of "wife", whether in a dating, common law, legally married, or post-separation relationship. Furthermore, based on accumulating knowledge and systematic research, the Dobashes show that "[m]any men who assault their partners are habituated to such acts and that violence is intentional behaviour chosen by men as a tactic or resource associated with attempts to dominate, control, and punish women." (Dobash and Dobash, quoted in Ipzon, 2001, p. 357).

Many noted researchers agree on the following basic assumptions: that men have been socialized to believe they have a right to control 'their' women and children; that men believe it is their prerogative to dominate those in their charge; that men use

abusive tactics to enforce their wishes because they want to, because they can, and because they can get away with it. The authors conceptualize male violence as one end of a continuum of male domination (Ipzon, 2001).

EMERGE, one of the earliest batterers` programs to exist in the United States, suggests that it is little wonder that male violence against women is an inevitable outcome of growing up in a sexist, racist, ableist, and patriarchal society. It asserts that all men are vulnerable to acting out gender domination in their intimate relationships. To address the issue effectively, David Adams, founding member of EMERGE and a strong pro-feminist man, suggests that male VAW activists must deal not only with individual batterers in group programs, but must equally address the structural inequalities that exist between men and women in our society. In public education campaigns, pro-feminist men "name the gender of the problem as male" and endorse campaign posters with the slogan "male abuse of power is a crime" (Gilliam & Sampson, quoted in Ipzon 2001, p. 361).

Other pro-feminist groups, steeped in experience with developing and running batterers` programs, developed tools such as the Duluth Power and Control Wheel, a widely used visual aid that illustrates the many tactics batterers use to exercise control over their partners (Paymar, 1993). These include intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, male privilege, economic abuse, harm to children as a means of controlling mothers, coercion and threats, minimizing and denying the violence, and blaming women for provoking their violence. The Duluth Domestic Violence Intervention Project also developed an Equality Wheel to provide an alternative way for men to learn relationship skills based on mutual respect, equality, and good communication.[8] Many of the specialized services that have evolved in Ontario and across Canada are rooted in these shared philosophical beliefs.

Hammer (1998) puts forth the view that men accrue benefits from being males, sons, fathers, and husbands. It is his contention that men receive both tangible and intangible benefits by virtue of being born male. Though clearly all men do not batter their intimate partners, all men do gain advantage in male-female relationships because of those fewer men who resort to overt use of force. It can be argued, therefore, that they achieve these personal and social benefits in both the private and public domain indirectly from the climate created by overtly violent men. Thus, Hammer asserts that our efforts must necessitate "the dismantling of the male privileged position over women and children in the family as a radical goal of the violence against women movement (Hammer, 2001, quoted in Ipzon 2001, p.131)."[9]

Integrating Diversity Into A Gender-based Analysis

Violence is about power, domination, and inequality. Yasmin Jiwani (2002), in her seminal paper, *Mapping Violence – a Work in Progress*, challenges the popular, white view that "we live in a violent society, and

[8] To view the Power and Control/Equality / Advocacy Wheels developed by the Duluth, Minnesota Project, refer to Appendices, p124-126.

[9] The poem On Male Privilege in Appendices, p. 127 is a useful teaching tool in articulating how male privilege permeates the everyday lives of men and women.

that the violence that takes place within the intimate context of the family, in effect mirrors the violence that surrounds us." While there is some truth to this view, particularly as one observes how violence is glorified, tolerated, and normalized in some contexts, Jiwani suggests that "it fails to address the complexity of social relations and the institutions that tolerate violence and those that prohibit the use of violence." Most importantly, this analysis does little to explain why certain groups in our society are far more vulnerable to violence than others. Earlier in this section, the necessity of dismantling the gender privilege of men was noted.

Jill Davies (1998) refers to two levels of risk faced by women who have been abused, both of which must be addressed by these individuals and their advocates during the process of risk analysis.

The first level she refers to as "batterer-generated" risks. These are risks that all women must consider when creating a safety plan for themselves and their children. They include seven broad categories:

1. physical injury,
2. psychological harm,
3. risks to and involving children,
4. financial risks,
5. risks to or about family and friends,
6. loss of relationship, and
7. risks involving arrest and legal status.

"Batterer-generated" risks refer to those dangers that individual batterers expose their partners to through their range of controlling tactics. These are the risks that, historically, the VAW movement is most experienced in, and, from a white woman's perspective, most comfortable with. Therefore, this first level of analysis permits the worker to focus on the universality of gender domination and individual "batterer-generated" risks, but fails to address the reality that not all women are the same.

Viewing woman abuse through the single lens of gender has alienated many marginalized and racialized women, since they may not see gender as their primary form of oppression. More importantly, marginalized and racialized women resent the unacknowledged privilege of white, non-disabled, middle-class women in the VAW movement who have framed the issue of violence, in terms of gender alone, thereby failing to recognize the disproportionate impact of abuse on women who experience multiple oppressions. **Marginalized and racialized women have, therefore, fought long and hard (with few, if any, resources), to name the disproportionate impact violence has upon racialized women, immigrant and refugee women, poor women, women with disabilities (both visible and invisible), lesbians, elderly women, and geographically isolated women.**

Audrey Lorde (1984) eloquently states in many of her writings, particularly *Sister Outsider*, that there is no hierarchy of oppression. She does clearly acknowledge that differences among women do exist. The terms of difference need not be mutually exclusive, suggesting that the complexity of women's lives is best understood using "both/and" language within a partnership model, rather than the "either/or" language of a dominator model (Eisler, 1990).

To ensure inclusivity within the VAW movement, all voices must be heard and every effort made to integrate proactively

anti-racist, anti-oppressive practices into all aspects of the work. While cooperation is essential in the face of the current backlash, there must first be a keen awareness and acknowledgement of white privilege, and proactive steps taken to deconstruct it; steps led by white VAW workers. **With privilege comes responsibility.**

Jiwani uses the excellent example of suffrage in Canada to demonstrate the unequal status of different groups of women in society. White women received the federal vote in 1918, followed by women of colour in 1947, and Aboriginal women in 1961[10].

Inclusivity necessitates that the VAW movement develops an integrated analysis of woman abuse that seeks to understand each woman **within her particular context**. Davis' second level of risk analysis assists us to do this by naming "life-generated" risks as well. These would include:

1. financial considerations/fear of poverty,
2. geographic isolation,
3. physical and mental health issues,
4. revictimization due to inadequate responses by major social institutions, and
5. discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, class, ability and/or any other bias.

For example, for a white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual woman, gender is likely the first window of her oppression. This is her experience. However, the social location of another woman cannot simply be determined by an outside observer; it is understood by hearing her own naming of the primary oppression in her life. A VAW worker might, for example, attend to a woman's sexual orientation, disability or Aboriginal status, only to hear the woman herself name poverty, age, faith, class, or ethnicity as her primary oppression. For VAW workers, identifying and acknowledging a woman's social location is an essential first step in understanding the particularities of women's lives. It is essential that a process of deconstructing how these intersections impact a particular woman be articulated and understood in a collaborative way for both the worker and the client.

In order for VAW workers to effectively advocate for woman abuse survivors, in terms of both "batterer-generated" risks and "life-generated" risks, workers need to work across differences and develop cultural competence. Agencies must employ diverse staff so women from various backgrounds will not be subjected to one dominant culture. Workers will require ongoing training around accessibility issues so that they will be proactive in their interventions. For example, "Do you need an interpreter?", "Do you want an advocate from your own cultural background?", "Do you need wheelchair access or other aids that would be beneficial to you?" These questions reflect only some of the accessibility needs that some women may face, and as such are an integral part of any assessment.

[10] For both Aboriginal women and women of colour, suffrage was granted to their communities as a whole.

THE JOURNEY: FROM GENDER-BASED TOOL TO RESOURCE KIT

Integrating Focus Groups and Provincial Consultation Findings

In our original proposal, a key issue in our objective was "[t]o explore ways in which a gender-neutral analysis of woman abuse affects existing policies, programs, legislation and delivery of services." While this remains a key element of our work for this initiative, we have expanded our guidelines for this project through consultation processes with various community activists, advocates, stake-holders, and frontline workers, to include an emphasis on an anti-oppression/racist analysis as well as a gender-based analysis.

The key elements that helped facilitate this shift came out of two focus groups held in June 2003, one with survivors and one with service providers, and a provincial think-tank held in July 2003. By all accounts the process of bringing together women from various backgrounds helped facilitate discussions that bridged the gap between gender, race, disability, sexuality, and class dynamics. In particular, much of the discussions from the Survivor Focus Group and the Think-Tank shed light on the importance of incorporating an analysis that systematically and institutionally explored how **women experience multiple oppressions on a daily basis, and on many different levels.** Specifically, it was brought to our attention during the Provincial Think-Tank day that Margrit Eichler, in consultation with Health Canada, had already conducted and completed an extensive gender-based analysis policy implementation tool that is widely used and cited in various organizations and agencies.

During our research, service providers and survivors of woman abuse expressed to us an urgent need for an understanding of anti-racism and oppression to be a central part of any analysis concerning gender-based initiatives. In addition, an intersectional and integrated anti-racist and oppression analysis could better serve to bridge the widening gap that marginalized women feel when seeking help for woman abuse. This criterion cannot be understated. For example, at the Provincial Think-Tank, one participant asked, "How can we understand patriarchy when we often conflate gender and sexism at the expense of negating race, class, age and ableism?" Another participant mentioned that "developing a gender-based analysis can be seen as problematic because it privileges gender over other oppressions, because women enter into the debate around patriarchy from divergent positionalities."

These insights proved poignant and necessary to any and all discussion concerning gender-based analysis and, hence, to the deliverable outcomes for this project. With this in mind, members of the Durham community expressed that a resource kit, rather than a tool, would be a more favourable and useful outcome to aid in the training and education of service providers at various levels of their respective agencies.

Another key issue identified from our consultation process surrounded issues of backlash. Some focus group survivors had difficulty pinpointing specific issues of backlash from the general difficulties women experienced in accessing and utilizing services in the "system". We

succeeded, however, in working with them to facilitate a more adequate identification of this issue. Some women in the focus groups questioned why a gender-based analysis was privileged over other issues of oppression. Others struggled with grasping why the gender-neutral concept was seen as wrong or inappropriate. One service provider felt that a gender-based analysis was only applicable to a small number of cases. She did not understand why it was wrong for men to speak up and want to be involved with their children. We worked within the group to encourage other women to speak up and explain the problems with the view that some organizations take when they position men as inherent victims in a system that continually subjugates women. Clearly, there are historical patriarchal imbalances that position men, and particularly white men, as the dominant group in society. This domination is steeped in an ideological understanding of men as the purveyors of knowledge and rationality in society. Therefore, any counter-discourse, or experience that threatens the dominant order or ideology, is met with resistance and backlash. Part of this backlash can be seen in attempts to silence women's voices by discrediting various women's movements and by re-victimizing women in the courts or via the media.

It became evident that the **development of a resource kit would be better suited to unearth and answer a bevy of questions and concerns that plague women's organizations and service providers.** Furthermore, the development of a resource kit would provide a concrete analysis of how divergent issues of backlash are manifested in terms of the insidious perpetuation of injustices, including, but not limited to, racism, classism, ableism, and heterosexism in our working environments and wider societal context.

Our shift toward the development of a resource kit also allows for multiple definitions and experiences of feminism to be articulated. Many are not aware of feminism and feminist agendas, and how important this analysis is to the work in the violence against women field. We feel that a resource kit can provide a framework for exploring how divergent feminist frameworks intersect along class, race, ability, and gender lines. Feminism and feminist approaches work in tandem with one's subjectivity. Therefore, any feminist lens that an individual uses to guide her or his work cannot be separated from her or his race, class, ability, and/or gender. As such, a woman of colour cannot simply utilize a gender-based analysis when working with others in her field. She can not and should not be expected to separate her race from her gender, and vice versa, because both inform who she is as a person and what unique experiences she will bring to the work.

Specifically, some service providers in Durham Region noted that it was easier for feminist agencies that work only with women to adopt a gender-based analysis. Other agencies that work with both men and women expressed the view that it seems more logical for such organizations to take up the gender-neutral agenda, as their main objective is often to protect children from both parents and to "save the family", rather than to protect women. However, the service providers suggested that training and education on such matters within organizations could help. They indicated that training needs to be ongoing, as staff often rotate and leave positions. In addition, they frequently face challenges posed by the pressures of overwork and underfunding. In

light of these issues, a resource kit can provide fundamental frameworks and a wealth of information that all levels of an organization can use in their efforts to work with women in abusive situations.

In retrospect, women survivors, service providers in Durham Region, and key stakeholders in the field felt strongly that a more appropriate outcome for this project would be a resource kit that could delve deeply into the many divergent items of woman abuse from multiple perspectives. A more intersectional approach to analyzing gender should not negate other oppressions. Hence, training and education must also address how women, children, and men all face various oppressions, and must acknowledge that violence against women is an issue involving the intersection of race, class, sexuality, ableism, and gender.

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF BACKLASH

> *Everybody wants change as long as everything stays the same.*
> Desmond Tutu

It is natural that people resist change and are more comfortable with the known. When this resistance is strong and displays certain characteristics, it is called "[b]acklash – a strong or violent reaction to some social change often provoked by fear or prejudice".[11]

Backlash always moves back toward the status quo. It co-opts public opinion, particularly through the media, by using skewed versions of arguments made by reformers and then claiming that the reformers' arguments are actually supportive of the status quo. It may manifest itself in different ways, at different times in history, but the intentions and messages are identical. Whatever needs to be done to keep the status quo in place, will be done.

By the mid 1990s, survivors and their allies in the anti-violence movement were increasingly confronted with a growing backlash. The political leadership of the day established a climate in which an attitude of victim-blaming, scapegoating, and pathologizing flourished and was subsequently expressed as a dominant voice in the media. This set the stage for extreme funding cuts to programs serving the most vulnerable in our communities, primarily women and children, especially in marginalized groups. The funding for grassroots and some mainstream VAW services was either eliminated or severely cut, and those dollars were redirected toward the criminal justice system with its narrow "law and order" agenda and "one size fits all" mentality. The language was co-opted into a gender-neutral, Victims of Crime framework. (for example, Victims of Crime Bill 1985).

Given that only one in four woman abuse survivors actually seeks assistance from the criminal justice system, a significant majority of survivors were left to either resolve their situation on their own or seek assistance from marginalized grassroots community services (OAITH, cited in McKenna and Larkin, 2002). Burdened with increased demands for service with even fewer resources, VAW activists have been overworked, underpaid, attacked, and forced to spend endless hours writing funding proposals for small sums of money that are project-driven with unrealistically high expectations. The impact on staff, management, and volunteers has been devastating; burn-out, illness, and exhaustion have affected many workers in a way that parallels the emotional abuse survivor's response to the tactic commonly referred to as 'Wearing Her Down'.

In relation to women's rights and concerns, Susan Faludi, in her book *Backlash -The Undeclared War Against American Women*, defines the term backlash as a "counter assault on women's rights" (1991, p. xviii). One activist goes further by stating that backlash is a misogynist counter-assault on women occurring at both personal and systemic levels. It is an attempt to retract the small but hard-won victories of the feminist movement. The backlash has always been present. Just as individual abusers use a continuum of abusive strategies to keep their partners isolated, intimidated, afraid, and

[11] Random House College Dictionary, 1998

discredited, so too backlash proponents use parallel tactics to achieve similar goals.

Suzanne Pharr, in *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism* (1988), expands on Faludi's view. She states that "it is virtually impossible to view one oppression, such as sexism or homophobia, in isolation because they are all connected" (p. 53). All the oppressions, she points out, are linked by a common origin – economic power and control – and by common methods of limiting, controlling, and destroying lives. There is no hierarchy of oppressions. Each is terrible and destructive. To eliminate one oppression successfully, a movement has to include work to eliminate them all or else success will always be limited and incomplete.

She further points out that "to understand the connections among the oppressions, one must examine their common elements". It is also useful to keep these in mind as one considers the use of gender-neutral language.

The Use of Gender-Neutral Language – A Tool of the Backlash

In brochures and other materials produced on woman abuse, there is an increasing use of gender-neutral language under the guise of enhancing equality. Underlying this approach is the belief that the problem of the battered husband is widespread and comparable in many ways to that of the battered wife and that therefore the problems of violent husbands and violent wives should be analyzed within the framework of family violence and dysfunctional families.

In reality, however, it camouflages the real problem. Some services have, for example, recently produced their brochures on domestic violence using completely gender-neutral language. Inexperienced individuals might hesitate to use the term "woman abuse," thinking that it is a biased term which denies that men too suffer abuse at the hands of their partners, and might feel that the "correct" term to use is "spousal abuse." Media misrepresents violence against women and children by implying these are situations of discrete individual stories and thus are viewed as isolated individual acts of violence, disconnected from the larger structure of patriarchal domination and control.

Then this mirage of implicating pathology as a sole cause **denies** the social roots of Violence Against Women and relieves the larger society of any obligation to end it.

As the statistics clearly show, however, while we would not deny that some men are abused by their partners, using the words "spousal abuse" hides the reality that, in terms of such things as the misuse of power differences, severity of injuries, and the ongoing chilling effects on women and their children, there are genuine significant differences between male and female victims of abuse. The use of gender-specific language and a gender-based analysis helps to reveal these differences.

Why the Use of Gender-Neutral Language Is Harmful

Gender-neutral language, which shapes gender-neutral attitudes, matters because it hides oppression, just as not naming race, class, sexual orientation and ability hides oppression.

This practice directly affects the ways decisions are made and services are provided to woman abuse survivors. For example, in the delivery of services for abused women and children, the notion that both parties are equally likely to abuse could result in the idea that the best use of the limited funding available for dealing with the effects of abuse is to encourage gender-neutral services for both men and women, thus removing the political analysis of an equality-rights framework. This, it was suggested, would lead to a fairer distribution of available funds. However, such a decision could only be made if the research on which it was based demonstrated that women were as violent as men. And, indeed, according to certain media articles, it seemed that that was so.

How the Media Misuse the Data Because of Gender-Neutral Language

The media have been only too happy to reinforce this notion of gender neutrality. For example, an article by Ilana Mercer, headlined "Women who run like wolves: Females are just as violent as males, and explaining away their victims only makes it worse" (July 16, 2001, The Ottawa Citizen) stated the following:

> Nowhere are the myths about female pacifism more robust than in spousal violence orthodoxy. There are hundreds of sociological surveys conducted with mathematical randomness that attest to the fact that women assault their partners as often or more often than men do. Gender symmetry in violence between couples is as well documented as it is well concealed by agencies such as Statistics Canada. What emerges from the many two-sex surveys conducted in Canada and in the U.S. over the past 30 years is that it is slap for slap, beating for beating, knifing and shooting for knifing and shooting. The fact that women are more likely to be injured in domestic altercations points to differences in physical strengths between men and women, not in culpability…
>
> The old stereotypes must be replaced with a nuanced understanding, one which recognises that if women can match men in almost every way that is good and fine, then so can they harbour the potential to be as sinister.

In another such article published in the National Post (May 23, 2000), author Donna Laframboise headlines with "What about the rights of battered men?" and writes:

> Back in September 1998, several people filed human rights complaints alleging the legal system is biased against men. Despite a mountain of studies indicating that family violence is an equal opportunity activity, men are overwhelmingly arrested, charged and convicted of this crime. …
>
> Things get even stickier in acrimonious divorce situations where unscrupulous or unstable women can – and do - get their spouses and ex-spouses arrested, charged,

> and detained merely by invoking the spectre of domestic violence. It sometimes takes days for these men to contact a lawyer, appear before a judge and post bail. Afterward, they are often crippled by legal fees. …
>
> There are no ad campaigns declaring husband abuse is a crime. There are no sensitivity courses explaining violent marriages from the perspective of battered men. No network of social workers, lawyers and shelters toils ceaselessly to educate the public about these men's plight.

In the week of July 27, 2000, a headline in the Globe and Mail read "Husbands also victims of spousal violence", and The Star lead with "Abuse rates similar for both sexes". The same week, the Calgary Herald (July 26, 2000), stated "Abuse stats show women in striking distance of men." This article says the following:

> During the past two decades, my associates (Dr. Grandin and Dr. Brinkerhoff) and I have researched and written extensively on the hidden side of domestic violence, that of husband abuse. We have shown that whenever female and male respondents are asked identical questions, fairly consistent patterns of gender symmetry emerge, women being at least as likely as men to report committing physically violent acts against their married or cohabiting partners.

In a local community consultation, the Violence Prevention Coordinating Counsel (VPCC) received written documentation from an agency indicating their belief that "the preferred future for our community would be that stereotypes and gender bias in partner violence and abuse responses would be eliminated." Enclosed in the brief were a set of gender-neutral guiding principles that **directly challenged** those held by the VPCC. The following is an a excerpt from a document by Paul Szabo, Liberal MP for Mississauga South[12]:

> Violence against women has spawned an enormous and influential industry and the issue has become a powerful tool of social advocacy. In some respects, it has also become the social weapon of choice because there is no excuse for abuse. If a woman claims abuse, she is a victim. If a man claims abuse, he is a wimp. It is often said that women are oppressed by the power and control exercised by men. Those are the social truths which are exploited by some and feared by others. Those are the social truths that breed convenient tolerance – tragic tolerance of domestic violence.
>
> In a 1994 article entitled "Backlash and Battered Husbands", co-authored by Dr. Sniechowski and Dr. Sherven, they discussed the subject of how partners in an abusive relationship are drawn together. It was their view that men and women, consciously and unconsciously, design together the relationship arrangements that house their lives. Over time, both are responsible and accountable, to varying degrees, for what happens. A focus on laws and police policies will not change the battered woman's character. If she assumes no responsibility for involvement in the violence, she will remain blind to her collusion and the likelihood of her developing a healthy relationship is very negligible. The same is true of men.

[12] This is a document entitled "Tragic Tolerance of Domestic Violence" May 1998, available at www.paulszabo.com.

This remarkable addition to the literature of the denial of difference in spousal abuse, whether committed by men or women, seemed, however, to be supported by the statistics. The General Social Survey (GSS), research released by Statistics Canada on July 25, 2000, appeared to confirm this "equality of violence" concept when it indicated that eight percent (8%) of women and seven percent (7%) of men who were married or living in a common-law relationship in the previous five-year period experienced some type of violence committed by their partner on at least one occasion. The articles and books quoted above looked no further than the headlines. This, of course, played right into the agenda of fathers' rights activists.[13]

What the Use of Gender-Specific Language Reveals

A closer look at the actual findings, however, reveals that the nature, consequences, and frequency of spousal violence were more severe for women. For example, about forty percent (40%) of women in violent unions reported experiencing some form of physical injury compared with thirteen percent (13%) of men in violent unions. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of women in violent unions said that the abuse or threat of abuse was so severe that they feared for their lives, compared with seven percent (7%) of men in violent unions. Women were more than twice as likely as men to report having been beaten and five times as likely to say that they had been choked. In contrast, men were more likely than women to report having been slapped, kicked, bitten, or hit, or having had something thrown at them. The simplistic equal violence view also does not take into account the imbalance between men and women in sheer physical strength and power, nor the differences in the resources available to them.

Other Members of the Media Do Their Homework

Other members of the media countered the idea that women and men did not differ in their abuse of each other. While statistics do show that some men are victims of domestic violence, this should not be used to suggest that men are as vulnerable to female violence as women are to male violence, thus pretending that domestic violence is a gender-neutral phenomenon. At the same time, an article in the Winnipeg Free Press (August 17, 2000) pointed out that:

> The number of spousal abuse charges against women, while climbing, is but a fraction of those against men. In the last five years, 12,665 men have been charged and 2,277 women. Charges against women are stayed for lack of evidence in 73 percent of cases while 42 percent of charges against men are stayed. In addition, because the policy removed discretion, counter-accusations from the accused gave rise to a situation in which a

[13] Janet Normalvanbreucher (1999) describes in her document *Stalking Through the Courts - The "Father's Rights" Movement – How to Legally Stalk, Harass, and Intimidate Victims of Domestic Violence after a Restraining Order has been Issued*, the rise of the Fathers' Rights movement in the U.S. There is a parallel movement of fathers' rights activists growing in Canada, particularly since women won the right to a share in men`s property and pensions after the passing of the Family Law Reform Act in Ontario on March 1,1986. Refer to Susan Crean`s book, *In The Name of The Fathers:The Story Behind Child Custody* (1988), for an excellent analysis of the issues.

> single house call created double charges. …Some of these charges reflect situations that require intervention, but not an arrest; some are retaliatory.

Another article in the Star Phoenix (August 1, 2000) states:

> With only a one percentage-point difference in the number of women and men reporting incidents of violence, it would appear that both genders are suffering similarly from domestic abuse. However, the study goes on to show that the level and frequency of violence against women was much more severe than against men. Women were more likely than men to slap, kick, bite or throw some object. Men were more likely to beat, choke, sexually assault or use (or threaten to use) a knife or gun against their partner – and to do so on more occasions.

In an article by J.F. Conway in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record (August 19, 2000) titled "Let's put violence against husbands in perspective", the author goes on to state:

> In research for my family book, I have kept abreast of the literature on domestic violence, and can assure you that domestic violence against men is well documented and has, in fact, been studied carefully.
>
> This small truth becomes a big lie when we fail to take the next step and look closely at the nature, the frequency, the context and the outcomes of episodes of domestic violence.
>
> If we stop and just conclude, for example, as the anti-feminist men's movements will, that domestic violence is equally distributed in the family and is not a gender issue, we will perpetuate a big lie by clinging to this small truth. …
>
> Three times as many husbands kill wives than wives kill husbands. Police data reveal that in 52 percent of husband-victim domestic homicides, the violent episode was initiated by the victim (this was true in only six percent of wife-victim domestic homicides).
>
> A Canadian woman is nine times more likely to be murdered by her husband than by a stranger. The most common, and therefore typical, pattern of spousal violence against men was a woman-victim lashing back at her abuser. Women seeking separation and divorce face a dramatically elevated risk of violence at the hands of the estranged partner. This is very rare in the case of men seeking divorce or separation.
>
> **The research, therefore, has been very clear and consistent: Women face an epidemic of domestic violence, whereas men face relatively minor events which rarely become serious and life-threatening.**

A LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE GENDER SYMMETRY DEBATE

A perennial and predictable 'red herring' challenge frequently raised at training sessions or media events on woman abuse is the frequent asking of questions such as, "What about women who abuse men? Aren't women just as violent as men?" While it is essential to acknowledge that some men are victims of female violence, the numbers are small.[14] All violence is unacceptable, no matter who the victim. Much of the experience gained in the past three decades in relation to the Violence Against Women movement has been extremely helpful when workers are confronted with male victims of female violence. However, to give credence to the allegations or implications that battering in intimate relationships is equally committed by both men and women, and is thus a "gender-neutral" issue, is misleading to the public. This is another example of Conway's view of Small Truths hiding Big Lies.

This initiative will explore and briefly document the pervasiveness of this trend toward a gender-symmetry analysis, conduct a literature review and analysis in response to the main points raised, and explore examples and ways in which this trend impacts on service delivery. This process was informed by focus groups including woman abuse survivors and VAW service providers, as well as participants attending a provincial think-tank. While much has been elucidated regarding gender frameworks, it is important to recognize and acknowledge that there are limitations to this literature review. The authors annotated in this review rarely make mention of, or explore the dynamics of how race, class and or ability are also key factors in understanding an integrated analysis of violence against women.

> Men of all ages and in all parts of the world are more violent than women. For this reason the language in this book is mostly gender specific to men. When it comes to violence, women can proudly relinquish recognition in the language, because here at least, politically correct would be statistically incorrect.
> Gavin de Becker, author of the well-known classic *The Gift of Fear* (1997)

Domestic Violence Is a Gender-Neutral Term and Hides Woman Abuse

In every credible piece of literature, research, training curriculum, program, and policy related to addressing violence in the home during the past thirty years, the focus inevitably remains directed at the most vulnerable members of the family – women in the role of "wife" and their children. While an assortment of terms have been used to describe the epidemic, such as family violence, domestic violence, spousal violence, spousal assault, or marital violence, the bottom line is always the same: workers have been dealing with the reality that violence is directed toward women and their children. As one activist noted, "the

[14] For Information on Husband Battering and Resources for Services for Male Victims of Violence refer to the following reports: Health Canada (Prepared by Leslie Tutty) *Husband Abuse: An Overview of Research and Perspectives.* Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, l999 and Government of Canada. *A National Directory of Services and Programs for Men Who Are or Have Been Victims of Violence*. Ottawa: Minister of Health, 2002.

truth is non-negotiable." That violence, overwhelmingly, is woman abuse.

But why do many people continue to be driven to elevate the rare phenomenon of "husband battering" to the same epidemic proportion as "wife battering"?[15] Two possibilities exist. The first one is a genuine attempt at clarification: "If men batter women, then does that mean women must batter men as well?" This struggle to make sense of a complex topic is rooted in a desire to be fair and unbiased. When people who ask this question are presented with accurate information in an accepting, non-defensive manner, they are typically reassured and the discussion moves on.

The second possibility – which is much harder to contend with – is that some people have no genuine desire for the truth. Their goal is to confuse, discredit, trivialize, and provoke the speaker, writer, or researcher. Armed with questionable statistics and studies, anti-feminist speakers and writers work to put feminists/pro-feminist allies on the defensive, while seeking to undermine their equality-seeking efforts. Additional tactics include discrediting feminist work by suggesting it is biased, sexist, narrowly focused, exclusionary of men and thus recognizing only half the problem. Attempts are made to engage in a "statistics war" amidst accusations of feminists` use of poor research skills.

The Backlash Position – Domestic Violence Is a Gender-Neutral Issue

Father's rights/Men's rights activists argue that statistics show women are just as likely to initiate and commit acts of violence against men as men are to do so against women. They would argue that gender symmetry exists when it comes to identifying victims and perpetrators, since accepting the phenomena of "husband battering" to them is just as prevalent as "wife battering". They assert that focusing on women's safety will result in unfair treatment toward men. They suggest that women do readily admit to acting as violently toward their spouses as do men. They state that men and women assault each other at equal rates with identical intentions resulting in equal effects. Furthermore, they suggest that both men and women are equally culpable for the violence. They insist that the provision of specialized services and programs for battered women and their children is evidence that the government has bought into feminist propaganda which falsely claims that violence against women is a major social problem. In their view, this suggests gender bias against men, and they claim that as a result, an epidemic of husband battering is being ignored, and the voices of men's rights advocates are being silenced. True equality, they insist, would mean that the same specialized services and programs should exist for male victims of female violence. To do otherwise would be reverse sexism.

[15] Small, Enndicott Shirley, "Why Husband-beating is a Red Herring Issue" in Sinclair, Deborah, *Understanding Wife Assault: A Training Manual for Counsellors and Advocates*. Ontario Government, 1985. Available to order at website www.womanabuseprevention.com

Underlying Assumptions and Sources Used To Support the Backlash Position

The underlying assumptions in this position are that men and women operate from a level playing field, that neither gender has advantages nor disadvantages, that both men and women are equally capable of violence, and that historical patterns of oppression against women and children are irrelevant when it comes to addressing domestic violence. This position also assumes that there is no overlapping impact of other "life-generated" risks, such as poverty, race, class, ability, and sexual orientation. Proponents of this view maintain that there is no differential impact of violence on men or women, assuming that violence is violence, an assault is an assault, and that understanding the context is an unnecessary detail.

Proponents of such opinions draw on a small number of selective research studies that support their perspective, while neglecting the preponderance of studies that negate their findings. Kimmel provides an excellent, in-depth review of their primary sources, including more than 100 empirical studies or reports that seem to suggest that rates of domestic violence are equivalent between men and women. He refers to two frequently quoted, large scale reviews of the literature, by Archer (2000) and Fiebert (1997), that purport to demonstrate gender symmetry in domestic violence and typify the sources used and arguments made by gender-symmetry proponents. These are the foundational pieces upon which most of their research rests (DeKeseredy, W.S. & Schwartz, M.D, 1998).

A Critique of the Conflict Tactics Scale

Most of the studies used by gender-symmetry proponents rely heavily on studies that use conflict tactic scales as a measurement of family conflict. These survey measurements are highly flawed when it comes to measuring the true nature of violence against women. The most widely used method of the measurement of family conflict was developed by Murray Straus, Richard Gelles, and Suzanne Steinmetz (1980). The survey questions how couples settle differences. For example, the following statement would frame how the issue of conflict is presented in this survey to men and women in intimate relationships.

> No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I'm going to read some things that you and your (spouse/partner) might do when you have an argument. I would like you to tell me how many times…in the past 12 months you… Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) (Straus, 1990 p. 33).

There are three main problems with this much-used and much-criticized measurement tool, the results of which are often taken selectively and out of context (Dobash et al, 1992).

The first problem with the CTS is that of **exclusion**. It does not address high-risk matters. Its questions do not include many aspects of violence that reflect an ongoing pattern of battering, intimidation,

domination, and humiliation of the victim. It does not ask about rape or other forms of sexual assault, nor about choking, suffocating, and scratching. It does not address post-separation abuse, which is the highest risk time for battered women and the time when violence often escalates. Stalking, psychological terrorist tactics (suicidal and homicidal threats), and abuse of mothers and children during custody and access disputes are not addressed.

The second problem with the CTS is the **lack of context**. It does not place the self-disclosures of men and women in context. It counts the **number** of violent acts only. It does not measure whether an act is a single incident or part of an ongoing pattern of violence. Furthermore, research suggests that women are more likely than are men to admit the use of physical aggression usually in milder forms, for example, a slap (Worchester, 2002). Research also suggests that a man is not threatened or intimidated by his female partner's aggression. In fact, a number of men treat it like a joke (Kimmel, 2002).

Neither do the CTS reveal the presence or severity of injuries. A slap on the arm could be counted in the same way as an open-handed blow to the head. Interviewers are also left to assess the difference between mild and more serious forms of violence.

Johnson, however, makes the distinction that these milder forms of what he refers to as 'common couple violence' are often what is captured in these types of family conflict surveys. In his view this accounts for the wide discrepancy between CTS statistics and those statistics, gathered from police, hospitals, and shelter records that reflect ongoing patterns of battering that he refers to as 'patriarchal terrorism' (Johnson, 1995).

The third problem with the CTS is that of **interspousal reliability**. Only one member of each family was interviewed, either the husband or the wife. Subsequent research suggests that husbands' and wives' accounts of the same incident are quite different in terms of how frequently the violence occurred, and of the nature and severity of the violence (Szinovacz, 1983; Jouriles and O'Leary, 1985).

Relying primarily on the findings of CTS surveys, which reflect an equal use of violence between husband and wives, ignores a large source of more nuanced research studies reporting conflicting findings.

In Archer's review of the literature, 76 of the 82 studies used, referenced the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) as the sole measure of domestic violence. In Fiebert's review, 55 of the 79 empirical articles reviewed also relied on the CTS as the only measure of domestic violence. In Fiebert's remaining articles, Kimmel found fault with the conclusion reached, since a number of the samples were of young people under 30, rather than of married couples. Other studies examined **perceptions** of violence rather than violence itself, while one study on witnessing violence contained no relevant data, and another study of spousal homicide did not include post-separation homicide.

The only quantitative survey that purports to find gender symmetry without using the CTS as a measure was done by Fiebert's graduate student Gonzalez, in an unpublished masters thesis (1997). This, however, reaches a conclusion without ever interviewing men. It is impossible to make such inferences about gender symmetry in the absence of one gender.

Kimmel is highly critical of such research methods, and goes so far as to suggest that this type of research "turns out to be far more of an ideological polemic than a serious scholarly undertaking" (Kimmel 2002, p.1336).

Interestingly, both Straus and Gelles, the originators of the CTS have publicly stated their disapproval of the way in which their findings have been manipulated by those supporting the backlash position of gender symmetry. Despite the small but serious reality of battered husbands, Gelles suggests that it is misogynistic to manipulate data in order to "prove" that women are equally as responsible for battering as are men:

> **There are very few women who stalk male partners, or kill them and then their children in a cataclysmic act of familicide. The most brutal, terrorizing and controlling harmful intimate violence is carried out primarily by men.**[16]

In supporting Gelles' contentions, Straus too goes on public record saying:

> **…although women may assault their partners at approximately the same rate as men, because of the greater physical, financial, and emotional injury suffered by women, they are the predominant victims. Consequently, the first priority in services for victims and in prevention and control must continue to be directed toward assaults by husbands (1997, p. 219).**

Suffice it to say that the evidentiary sources to which men's rights activists refer, in order to support their assumption of gender symmetry or gender neutrality in domestic violence, are questionable at best and deliberately misleading at worst. **Despite their suggestion that there is considerable "scientific evidence" to support their allegations that there is widespread violence against husbands and boyfriends, a closer look at the evidence suggests that is not the case** (Saunders, 2002)**.**

Flood (1999) suggests that there are four problems with the claims made by fathers` rights and men's` rights groups. First, they use aspects of certain authors` work selectively, as the authors themselves disagree that men and women are equally the victims of domestic violence. Second, they ignore serious methodological flaws in the CTS. Third, they ignore volumes of evidence that conflicts with their claims. Finally, their strategies are harmful to men, particularly to male victims of violence in five ways:

- they focus on the wrong target – that is, attack women and feminism rather than a patriarchal system that reproduces unhealthy and destructive models of manhood,
- they confuse the public by muddying the waters with backlash arguments rather than partnering with feminist groups who do express concern for the real need for specialized services for legitimate male victims of violence,
- they alienate potential allies by denigrating the efforts of women and men who have devoted their lives to building anti-violence services and ignoring the expertise they have developed that could be very helpful in addressing the needs of male victims of violence
- they operate on a simplistic "You've got it, we want it too" logic which ignores the

[16] Gelles, Richard, Domestic Violence: Not an Even Playing Field. Available: http://www.serve.com/zone/everyone/gelles.html

fact that what works for female victims of violence is not necessarily what male victims of violence require. A model of service that recognizes the differences between male and female victims of violence is essential, and

- lastly, they have attacked the use of criminal and civil protection remedies in domestic violence cases claiming that false allegations of domestic violence and child abuse are routinely made and victims are too readily believed. This undermines the need to create safety and protection for both female and male victims of violence.

Crime Victimization Studies

Kimmel's review of the gender symmetry literature suggests that comparing the findings of CTS-based surveys with crime victimization studies is like comparing apples with oranges. Each is measuring entirely different experiences, using different samples, which result in disparate conclusions. Kimmel suggests "that researchers and practitioners need to acknowledge women's use of violence while understanding why it tends to be very different from violence by men toward their female partner" (2002, p. 1332).

Crime victimization studies tend to find dramatic gender asymmetry in the rates of domestic violence. They find that women report six times as many incidents of violence by their male partners, as men report against their female partners. Crime victimization studies also suggest that violence increases in severity over time, and that moderate violence earlier often leads to more severe violence later in the relationship. This is supported in the spousal homicide studies where women killed by their partners often had a history of previous harm perpetrated against them in the relationship. Thus there is agreement that domestic violence is typically serious, escalates over time, and is perpetrated primarily by men (Kimmel, 2002).

Kimmel also cites a number of studies that challenge commonly held beliefs about men's disclosure of victimization and their reporting practices. For example, he cites Bowker's (1998) study suggesting that men will tend to overestimate their victimization and women will tend to underestimate theirs. In regards to men's willingness to reach out for help, it is often believed that men would be too ashamed or embarrassed to call the police or to attend at the hospital. However, a number of studies present a very different picture. For example, Kimmel says that men assaulted by their female partners "are actually more likely to call the police, more likely to press charges, and less likely to drop them" (2002, p. 1345). Another study to which Kimmel refers found that men underreport the violence they perpetrate against women by as much as 50% (Edleson & Brygger, 1986).

Prior to 1993, most statistics related to violence against women, and particularly those occurring in the context of an intimate relationship, were drawn from police statistics and clinical studies based on disclosures from victims and offenders in treatment programs. These sources of statistics were frequently critiqued by the backlash as being limited in scope and likely to be considered more extreme cases, and therefore not to be representative of all incidents of violence. Following in the wake of the Montreal Massacre, arguments had intensified regarding the severity of violence

against women. Pressure was placed on the Canadian Federal Government to address what appeared to be a growing epidemic of violence against women. In an attempt to resolve the statistical controversy, in 1993, the Government contracted with Statistics Canada to undertake the first ever national survey in the world, generally known as the Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS).

Dr. Holly Johnson, the Chief of Research at the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics and at Statistics Canada, was the principal investigator in this study. A detailed methodological description of the study may be found in her book, *Dangerous Domains*. Dr. Johnson describes in detail Canadian women's experience of male violence, and their levels of comfort and safety both in their intimate relationships and the larger community. Though shocking to the public, the results confirmed what many counsellors, shelter workers, police officers, and court personnel observed daily.[17]

[17] For an excellent analysis of the criticism launched after the release of the VAWS findings, refer to Anthony Doob`s article *Understanding the Attacks on Statistics Canada`s Violence Against Women Survey*, in particular, his deconstruction of Margaret Wente`s opinion columns in the Globe and Mail, Nov.26 and Dec.3, 1994. (refer to bibliography for full references).

The Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) – An International Best Practice Standard

This study constituted the first effort to use a crime victim survey approach, a social science tool available since the 1970s, to focus specifically on women's experience of violence. Dr. Johnson and her colleagues sought expert advice from researchers, frontline workers, specialists in the area of domestic violence, and survivors themselves. Because of the sensitive nature of this work, interviewers were trained specifically to deal with the gathering of such intimate information, and were well informed of local resources if women requested help or were upset by the process of disclosing. The design and development phase of the project was lengthy. The first group testing and consultation enhanced the quality of the interview questions and ensured that sensitive interviewing skills were utilized. Unlike the Conflict Tactics Survey (CTS), which asks questions in terms of how couples settle differences, this survey took a unique approach specific to learning about women's experience of male violence in their lives. A typical example of such questions was:

> We are particularly interested in learning more about women's experience of violence in their homes. I would like you to tell me if your husband/partner has ever done any of the following to you. This includes incidents that may have occurred while you were dating...(p. 42).
>
> - Threatened to hit you with his fist or anything else that could hurt you
> - Threw something at you that could hurt you
> - Pushed, grabbed, or shoved you
> - Slapped you
> - Kicked, bit, or hit you with his fist
> - Hit you with something that could hurt you
> - Beat you up
> - Choked you
> - Threatened to use a gun or knife on you
> - Forced you into any sexual activity when you did not want to, by threatening you, holding you down, or hurting you in some way.

This type of question demonstrates that context is important, and that gender-neutral language hides reality. The in-depth data that was collected is still being analyzed in order to achieve a greater understanding of the reality of Canadian women's lives. **This study has become a model of best practice research that is being emulated in a number of countries around the world.**

Differences in the Use of Violence By Men and By Women

Despite the overwhelming evidence that suggests that gender symmetry in relation to domestic violence is largely a myth, it is still important to understand women's violence for a number of reasons.

Worcester (2002) examined the context in which violence in intimate relationships occurs. She stressed that counting the frequency of violent acts, without considering the context of social inequality and the gender roles that violence maintains, over-simplifies the issue. **The meaning and**

consequences of the violence in the lives of those involved must be considered. While it is important to acknowledge that men and boys are hurt by violence more often than women, it is also vital to note that men are most often injured by male strangers whereas women are mostly hurt by male intimates.

A true understanding of the differences in the use of violence by women and by men must include an understanding of the function of the violence, the reaction to the violence, and the consequences of the violence. **For males, the function of violence is usually the gaining of power and control over the long term. The function of the violence committed by women, on the other hand, is usually self-defense, protection of children, and an attempt to end the abuse** (Worcester, 2002). The woman's response to violence is usually fear, depression or anxiety. The Hamberger study found that significantly more **men** reported being angry, insulted, and **amused** by their partner's initiation of violent behaviour, compared to **women** who reported being more angry, insulted, and **afraid** than the male partner. Furthermore, the consequences of violence differ in that men are more likely to seriously injure or kill their female partners. As well, women seek more health care services for abuse-related issues than do men, a reality which suggests the more serious nature of male violence (Hamberger and Guse, 2002).

Another important difference, in terms of the risk faced by each gender is that stranger assault usually occurs only once, and is most often reported to the police. Violence by an intimate partner, however, particularly if children are present, typically escalates and is repeated over time and so is much more difficult for victims to report. Worcester goes on to suggest that the experience of violence disrupts the lives of men and women in dramatically different ways.

> The question is not whether women have the potential to be abusive, but whether their violence towards heterosexual partners is comparable to men's in terms of context, motivation, results and consequences (Das Das gupta, 2001, p. 3).

Recently, an increase in the rate of aggression among female youth has been noted. While the rate of violence has increased over the last two decades, the inclusion of indirect and relational forms of aggression in studies has resulted in the conclusion that female youth are more aggressive than previously thought (Odgers and Moretti, 2002). While it is important to acknowledge the increase of girls' aggression, it is vital to note that girls represent only 21% of the youth court caseload.[18] However, in general, girls engage in higher levels of relational aggression rather than overt aggression, while boys engage in higher or similar levels of overt aggression rather than relational aggression. Girls who are incarcerated are more likely than boys to have a range of mental health problems, including a higher incidence of sexual abuse, suicidal ideation and attempts, substance abuse, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Odgers and Moretti, 2002).

The same issues of power and control, lack of safety, and fear exist in lesbian and bisexual abusive relationships (Worchester, 2002). However, the impact of these issues is compounded both by a lack of services for the victims and by homophobia. There is a

[18] Women in Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, June 2001

tendency to deny violence in lesbian and bisexual relationships. According to the NVAW Survey, slightly more than 11% of women living with same-sex partners report being raped, physically assaulted, or stalked by a female cohabitant, compared with 30.4% of women with a live-in male partner. As issues of power and control are primarily linked to males, it was expected that there would be no abuse when the relationship consisted of two women. Court personnel have difficulty understanding the experience of bisexual and lesbian victims. Since women are not supposed to be batterers, there is no perpetrator, and, therefore, no victim. "Survivors of same sex rape could not expect to have their violations taken as seriously by courts as a heterosexual woman might if she were raped by a man" (Girshick, 2002, p. 1506). Indeed, few such charges are laid, and few are brought to court. Frequently, lesbians and bisexuals avoid the criminal justice system, as they do not want to risk humiliation or having to be "out" in court. Rarely are same sex sexual assaults taken seriously.

Barriers to service for lesbian and bisexual victims of abuse exist perhaps because the presence of female perpetrators challenges the gender-based interpretation of abuse being about power, privilege and control. As we begin to acknowledge that women can be violent, we need to consider how both women and men condone violence. We are now challenged to broaden our framework to include other forms of oppression. This broader framework includes patriarchy along with issues such as "race, class, immigration status and age" (p. 1515). This "hierarchical structure of dominance", which acknowledges the belief that one status group within a variety of dimensions (race, sex, ability, class, sexual orientation, etc.) is "superior, natural, and right over and above the others keeps the others in their place" (p.1516). Opposing this belief could be threatening to capitalistic values which support competition in order to prevail. A vision of equity and social justice is not consistent with a system which values hierarchy and domination. By working toward equality, acceptance, and human dignity, and against oppression in its many forms, we are working to end violence against women (Girshick, 2002).

TWO EXAMPLES OF CURRENT BACKLASH TRENDS

There are many ways in which the backlash functions. We look in more depth below at some current examples of the backlash. It is important to see how those who set the 'norm' act to maintain the status quo by co-opting advances made by women. **The use of gender-neutral language to describe issues that in reality are gender-specific, such as violence against women and children, is a deliberate tactic to hide women's inequality.** Current trends that indicate a backlash agenda include a mainstream media that gives greater and greater voice to anti-feminist sentiment. This confuses the public and perpetuates dangerous myths such as women are as violent as men. Two other examples of backlash include proposed amendments to the *Divorce Act*, which elevate risks to safety and security for abused women and their children and give abusers new harassment tools,[19] and the increase in dual arrests, which place battered women and their children at greater risk and further victimises women.

The Amendments to the Divorce Act, Bill C-22[20]

Nowhere is the backlash played out more clearly than in the recently proposed amendments to the *Divorce Act* . Referred to as Bill C-22, this Bill would further disadvantage women and their children substantially and set the struggle for women's equality rights back decades. **In both England and Australia similar legislation has been passed with the consequence of increased, rather than decreased litigation.** Recommendations included mandatory joint custody and shared decision making, maximum contact, parenting plans and mandatory mediation, coercive sanctions targeted against the "non -cooperative" parent and criminal sanctions against women who make "false allegations".

Background

It is unlikely that the general public has an accurate understanding of what is truly at stake. If they did, they would be as appalled as were those advocates and professionals who participated in the Senate hearings across the nation back in 1997, culminating in a deeply flawed report called "For the Sake of the Children: Report of the Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access".

From the outset, the very formation of such a committee was a political concession to the small but vocal opposition to the then

[19] Normalvanbreucher, Janet (1999) Stalking Through the Courts-The "Father's Rights" Movement – How to Legally Stalk, Harass, and Intimidate Victims of Domestic Violence after a Restraining Order has been Issued. (http://www.gate.net/~liz/liz/Frtactic.html) This document describes the rise of the Fathers' Rights movement in the U.S. There is a parallel movement of men`s rights and fathers' rights activists growing in Canada, particularly since women won the right to a share in men`s property and pensions after the passing of the Family Law Reform Act in Ontario on March 1,1986.

[20] On November 12, 2003, the House of Commons shut down, and as a result all the Bills currently before the House no longer exist, including Bill C-22.

newly implemented Guidelines on Child Support. The Guidelines were established to standardize child support based on the income of non-custodial parents (usually fathers) and on the number of children to be supported. An additional achievement was their examination of the inequity in income tax laws as they related to child support. Custodial parents (usually mothers) won the right to not pay income tax on child support, and non-custodial parents were no longer able to deduct their child support from their taxable income**. This was a remarkable gain for women and children who historically suffered severe financial disadvantage post separation.**

This hard-won gain was short-lived as the backlash found its voice in Senator Ann Cools and a small number of her colleagues in the Senate. They refused to pass the Bill on the basis that it was biased against men. Their rationale went like this: if fathers are going to be forced to pay for the children's living expenses, then mothers should be forced to ensure the father's right to access regardless of individual circumstances. The battle lines were drawn and the mainstream media, ignoring the different circumstances in the name of "equality", had a field day showcasing the fight between the father's rights activists and the feminists. The public was left to draw its own conclusions based on inflammatory and highly inaccurate claims of the Bill's bias against men, without acknowledging that **equal treatment does not necessarily mean the same treatment.** A Small Truth was told to hide the Big Lie.

First of all, the information-gathering process was extremely unprofessional. The primary voices heard from were individual fathers with heart wrenching stories of "wicked ex-wives" who denied these "upstanding, financially supportive gentlemen" their right to access to their children. Standing with these individual men were the fathers' rights groups, who repeatedly echoed claims of parental alienation and denial of access, and false allegations of woman abuse and child abuse. Meanwhile, credible authorities from the front line – social workers, shelter advocates, and researchers, steeped in knowledge and wisdom - were sidelined, spat at, mocked and generally treated with contempt and derision. That no one on this committee stopped this behaviour demonstrated their political agenda and bias from the outset (Diamond, 1999). Second, the data they collected was anecdotal and not representative of the truth. **No one doubts that in some cases, good fathers may be unfairly denied access and not be in the position to access the best resources to ensure a fair hearing. Feminists have a responsibility to challenge the injustice in those cases, and they do so.** But again**,** Small Truths, Big Lies.

The lack of balance and sound research led to widespread criticism of the report, and the Minister of Justice promised further consultations on proposed law reform options. In spring 2001, the Department of Justice and the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Family Law Committee released a consultation document entitled *Custody, Access and Child Support in Canada: Putting Children's Interest First*. The National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) and other provincial and national women's equality-seeking organizations decided to boycott these consultations, to protest the total absence of any gender-based analysis and to mark their dissatisfaction with the undemocratic aspects of the consultation. In collaboration

with the Ontario Women's Network on Custody and Access, they developed an extensive brief[21] to the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Family Law Committee that was sent to the Minister of Justice. An executive summary of the brief was also sent to all provincial Ministers of Justice. In November 2001, consultants tabled the report of this consultation.

NAWL and other feminist organizations have asked the federal, provincial and territorial governments to ensure that changes to family law not only be made in the best interest of children, but that they not jeopardize the autonomy and equality interests of women in the family. They believe that the government's policies must promote women's equality if it is to live up to its *Charter* obligations and to its commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action and other international instruments.[22]

The Truth About Separating and Divorcing Families

The truth is that the vast majority of separating and divorcing families in Canada are able to work out their custody and access arrangements outside of the court arena, whether on their own or with the help of a skilled mediator/counsellor. It is true that in most cases, the primary care-giver (usually the mother) continues to have uncontested sole custody post-separation and that non-custodial parents (usually fathers) have liberal access. These agreements are voluntarily arrived at and reflect the pre-separation reality of children's lives. The parents are committed to what's best for their children and attempt to minimize any unnecessary disruption by providing continuity of care by the mother and strong support, both emotionally and financially, from the father. Sixty nine percent (69%) of children live with their mothers whether there is joint custody or not. More than forty percent (40%) of fathers who have joint custody do not use their access, or at least no more than once a month. In those cases where fathers contest custody, they are successful 50% of the time.[23]

There are a small minority of cases that do require the court's assistance – three point eight percent (3.8%), according to the Department of Justice records. Although these cases are referred to as "high conflict" in the gender-neutral argument, they are in reality almost always abusive situations with women and/or children as victims. For these few but serious cases, the "no fault" analytic framework inherited from the 1980s law reform does not work.[24]

A Gender-Neutral Framework Hides Oppression

[21] A copy of this brief can be obtained on their site at http://www.nawl.ca/brief-2001-06.html

[22] Refer to the Recommended Reading list for examples of International Tools and Instruments.

[23] Bourne,Paula, "Women, Law, and the Justice System", p.341-Chapter 5 in Ruth Roach et al, *Canadian Women`s Issues*,Vol.1 Toronto, James Lorimar&C., 1993.[quoting:Manitoba Association of Women and the Law, *Gender Equality in the Courts*,1988.] 1988.], and cited in the *New England Law Review,* Spring, 1990.

[24] Johnson,J. and Campbell, L.E.G. "Parent-Child Relationships in Domestic Violence Families Disputing Custody". *Family and Conciliation Court Review, 31,* (1993), pp.282-298

For the public's sake, it is essential for them to see through the "gender neutral" framework being promoted in the amendments. **A gender-neutral approach hides the truth. It makes a claim to be unbiased but in reality, women as mothers are being discriminated against.** Their commitment to the day-to-day care of children and home is once again being devalued. Mothers typically organize their lives around their children's lives. They drop out of the workforce to have them and most times use their recently won 50-week maternity leave fully. Though men have access to a paternity leave, it is still a rare phenomenon for a father to take advantage of it. When they do, they get applause from the feminist movement which has stated for years that children would benefit from close loving attention from their fathers and that family life would be dramatically improved if fathers were to be actively involved in the daily tasks of child-rearing and domestic work. Indeed, one of the accomplishments of the feminist movement was to open the doors to men as fathers by fighting negative sexist stereotypes that shamed men who wanted to be stay-at-home dads and by encouraging their rights to paternity leaves.

However, the current climate paints a different picture. Attempts to change the language in the *Divorce Act* to one of "shared parenting" continue the trend towards "mandatory" joint legal custody, started in the 1980s. **What is really being sought is not more authentic involvement with the rewarding but relentless tasks of caring for children, but rather more rights and control for non-custodial parents (usually fathers) without the responsibilities.** Despite the desire to impose mandatory joint legal custody through processes such as mediation, parent education classes, and parenting plans, the reality is **you can't mandate cooperation**. The parents who would benefit from these types of services will seek them out voluntarily. The small number of parents who are not able to reach cooperative parenting agreements for their children use big resources in the court arena. One must examine the reasons for this.

A large number of these cases are abuse cases. Imagine being an abused woman, forced into mediation, forced into a shared parenting plan, forced into sending your children to his home when you are no longer there to protect them. Women would end up more helpless after separation than before.

Abusers are highly skilled at manipulation. They would have a field day if these amendments were to pass. And women/mothers and children would once again be under the "Rule of Thumb."[25] When fathers do fight for custody, the courts frequently find in their favour. In Canada, they win in more than 50% of the cases, and in some United States jurisdictions, as high as 75%.[26]

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[25] It is only within the last 120 years that wife assault has been considered to be illegal. Prior to that time, laws regulated the extent to which men could physically discipline their wives. One example was the popular "Rule of Thumb," termed in response to a law that permitted husbands to enforce domestic discipline in their homes as long as they used a switch no broader than the width of their thumb. It was applied not only to wives but also to children, apprentices, and livestock. English codifier of common law, William M. Blackstone, crafted this law in 1767 (cited in Sinclair,1985, p. 20).

[26] Bourne, Paula, "Women, Law, and the Justice System", p.341-Chapter 5 in Ruth Roach et al, *Canadian Women`s Issues*, Vol.1, Toronto, James Lorimar&C., 1993 [quoting: Manitoba Association of Women and the Law, *Gender Equality in the Courts*, 1988]. and cited in the *New England Law Review,* Spring, 1990.

Violence is always about power and control, and if abusers are provided with more tools to further erode women's efforts to escape their abuse, the situation will have worsened. Women in abusive situations need direct and immediate access to the courts. They need a well-informed judiciary who will strengthen their rights and their children's rights to live free from violence, coercion, and control. Abusers need a strong judiciary to hold them accountable for their abusive behaviour, and to mandate them into specialized treatment programs that challenge this behaviour through a power and control analysis (not with an anger management model). As well, children need a safe and secure home, a continuous relationship with their primary care-giver (usually the mother), and protection from any exposure to untreated abusers.

The overall tone of the current proposed amendments exacerbate an environment that discriminates and devalues the work of primary caregivers (usually mothers but sometimes fathers), denies and trivializes male abuse against women and children, and perpetuates myths of access denial, false abuse allegations, and parental alienation as if they were a common occurrence. In reality these things rarely occur. Again Small Truths, Big Lies.

An Increase in Dual Arrests

Mandatory arrest laws that were originally designed to protect victims of battering are now being used as one more tool of the abuser to harass, humiliate, isolate, and break the spirit of the victim.

Currently as many as twenty percent (20%) of the domestic violence arrests in the U.S. are of women. Most of them were acting in self-defense when they used violence against their partners, or were trying to protect their children. The arrest and prosecution of battered women who use violence reflects an inadequate understanding of the gendered nature of woman abuse. This occurs, in large part, because the use of gender-neutral terms such as "domestic violence" or "spousal abuse" tends to suggest that women are as likely as men to abuse and to do so as severely, thus triggering the need to arrest them.

Kurz (1999) reported that divorced women on welfare experienced the highest rates and most severe forms of violence. She speculated that men in lower social economic backgrounds had fewer resources with which to control their partners, so they resorted to violence. It stands to reason that mandatory charging and arrest policies may consequently affect poor women and women of colour disproportionately.

In a recent study entitled *If Low Income Women of Colour Counted in Toronto*, writer and researcher Punam Khosla noted that "in a cruel twist of irony, police forces have begun laying charges against abused women in situations where there are visible signs of struggle. Poor and racialized women are disproportionately more likely to be affected by this gender-neutral application of laws intended to protect women" (2003, p. 34).

Khosla's study will serve as a foundational piece for the VAW movement in that it is one of the first of its kind to address the systemic and specific particularities regarding the intersectional and lived reality of multiple

oppressions that women of colour face daily.

Hirschel and Buzawa (2002) support Khosla's argument that particular groups of women based on race, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, and ability are re-victimized by an unjust application of the law (2002, p. 1467). They suggest that practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and advocates have all expressed concerns about the differential impact of arrest policies on particular groups of women. Therefore, they argue that this is an extremely important area of future research as it has significant negative implications for the most disenfranchised women in our society. "African American or other women of color, and/or lesbians are being unjustly arrested in intimate partner violence cases" (ibid).

When both parties are labeled as abusers and are treated as equally blameworthy, the message to the batterer is that such behaviour is excusable, was perhaps provoked, and that he will not be held accountable for the violence. At the same time, victims who have not engaged in violent behavior, or have done so only in self-defense, are left confused, humiliated, and stigmatized when such orders are issued against them. Women are more likely to plead guilty immediately, both out of fear of the authorities and as a way of getting home to their children.

The dual arrest phenomenon, and the corresponding increase in arrests of women, is a recent trend in Ontario which began when the province's mandatory charge policy was implemented in the *Policing Standards Manual (2000) – Domestic Violence Occurrences*. The problem is not with the policy itself, but rather with its interpretation and practice. The policy does not require that a charge be laid **whenever** there is a complaint of domestic assault. Rather, the policy stipulates that where **reasonable grounds** exist to believe that a criminal offence has occurred, then charges must be laid.

To deal with the possibility of a "He said – She said" scenario which officers state they frequently face, the Ministry of Public Safety and Security has proposed that a primary aggressor perspective be utilized within these investigations to identify the real perpetrator and real victim. This assessment tool has been incorporated into the curriculum used in the Domestic Violence Investigators (DVI) course for police services across Ontario. It is believed that a well-trained police department, using a primary aggressor theory and monitoring compliance among arresting officers, would eliminate more than fifty percent (50%) of arrests of women and show them not to be problematic in relation to public safety, interpretation, and practice.[27]

Factors to Consider in Determining the Identity of the Batterer and the Victim

According to Daniel G. Saunders (2002), the way in which women's violence is framed can lead to unequal and inequitable policy outcomes. For example, if the criminal justice system views domestic violence as "mutual combat", then there is a strong possibility that dual arrests will be a

[27] Pence, Ellen. (2001)..St. Louis County Sheriff's Office *Domestic Violence Handbook and Training Guide for Patrol Deputies*. Safety and Accountability Audit Committee.

common occurrence (p. 1425). However, if women's use of violence in intimate relationships is viewed primarily as a form of self-defense or as a reaction to years of cumulative abuse, then laws and policies would reflect the historical context in which violence occurs for many women. Without a contextual understanding of women's use of violence, severe and negative outcomes are inevitable (p. 1426).

The application of progressive policing practices should not be limited solely to incident-based policing of domestic violence situations, but also utilized to explore the wider context in which specific incidents occur. One of the ways to enhance a domestic violence criminal investigation is to consider a number of factors that would assist in establishing if a historical pattern of abuse exists.

According to a primary aggressor framework, the perpetrator is defined as the party whose actions, both during this specific incident in question and throughout the history of the relationship, have caused the most fear and intimidation in the other. The officer should determine which individual, if left unrestrained, would likely cause the greater degree of fear and pose the greatest degree of danger to the other. In other words, the officer must ask: "If I walk away and do nothing, who do I think is most likely to seriously harm the other?"

In cases where each party is claiming to have been assaulted by the other, it is especially important to conduct a thorough investigation to determine who the true perpetrator is prior to laying charges. There are a number of factors to be considered in determining which party is the perpetrator.[28] These factors are:

1. prior complaints
2. relative severity of injuries
3. likelihood of future injury to each person
4. whether someone acted in self–defense
5. relative size of both parties
6. relative strength of both parties
7. assessment of pre-emptive strike
8. consistency of physical evidence
9. demeanor
10. state of sobriety/insobriety
11. threats made
12. the relative degree of fear expressed
13. possession of and/or ability to use a firearm

Another useful measure of the gender asymmetry in the reporting of intimate abuse is found in the differing nature of the disclosures made by male and female complainants. When they are provided within a safe environment in which to disclose, female victims' reports of abuse are typically very comprehensive compared to those of male victims. As Dobash and Dobash (1998) observe:

"Women's narrative descriptions of the events of their experiences are far longer and more richly detailed, entering the narrative at a much earlier point in the unfolding drama and extending the narrative to include injuries and other consequences."

[28] Adapted from "Promising Practices: Improving the Criminal Justice System's Response to Violence Against Women" STOP Violence Against Women Grants Technical Assistance Project, Washington, D.C., 1998.

This detail and richness found in women's reports leads, consequently, to their tendency to establish the abuse in its historical context. In this way, women's reports of intimate abuse can function in themselves to assist police officers to accurately identify the victim and the perpetrator within a given situation.

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CREDIBLE STATISTICS IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN[29]

The public has a right to know and understand the reality of women's lives in the current backlash. Most people get their information from the various media! There is an assumption that the members of the media actively seek out the truth, check their facts and their sources, and that, therefore, what they present is the truth.

Unfortunately, the reality is that there is a great deal of misinformation being propagated in the media. Those who are entrusted with seeking the truth have an ethical obligation not simply to accept what they are given by their sources, but to inquire and probe and check. Too often, this is not the case; the media accept uncritically, perhaps even cynically, the information given to them by those who have a particular viewpoint or agenda to promote. For the sake of increasing circulation or viewer numbers, the media will create controversy where none would exist were the facts checked. An example of this is the misinformation promulgated in the media about women being as violent as men. Tragically, this has the effect of not only justifying the current government's cutbacks to social welfare programs in favour of increased funding for the justice system, but also of demeaning the daily experiences of women who live with the fear of violence, and further endangering them by providing the abuser with even greater weapons with which to continue abuse.

The media, rather than colluding with the patriarchy to maintain the structures that hold oppression in place, must decide whether it wants to maintain its integrity, and ultimately whether it will be part of the problem or part of the solution.

It is important to state the present reality of women and children's lives in Canada by noting the following truths:

- Women working in the labour market earn 64% of the earnings of men. Even when working full-time, women earn only 73% of the earnings of their male counterparts. Among women, Aboriginal women, women of colour, women with disabilities, and immigrant women earn significantly less.
- When women separate from or divorce their male partners, their income falls. Almost 60% of single mothers live below the poverty line and that number rises to 80% for mothers with children under seven. According to the Vanier Institute of the Family, 21% of Canadian children live in poverty, but 65.8% of children in mother-led single-parent families are poor.
- The well-being of children's primary caregivers (including freedom from woman abuse) and the economic conditions in which they live are the most critical indicators of children's well-being.
- Before separation, housework and caring for children is evenly shared between parents in only 10% of families, with 28% of women doing most of this work and 52% doing it all. Among women with four or more children, 83% do all

[29] These statistics were adapted from The Freda Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children and the Ontario Women`s Network on Child Custody and Access (OWNCCA) Lobby Materials.

of this work. Men's participation in caring for children does not increase when women are working in the labour market.

- After separation, women remain the primary caregivers of children. The majority of children live only with their mothers, regardless of whether or not a court order is in place. Even when there is an order for "shared custody," children continue to live only with their mothers in 68.6% of cases, compared with 10.5% where children live only with their father.
- The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth reports that 40% of separated or divorced fathers never visit their children or visit them irregularly. Sixteen percent visit every two weeks and only 30% visit every week.
- The Muriel MacQueen Fergusson Centre suggests that although 40%-60% of family court cases involve violence, overwhelmingly against women, this information is not included in most files before family court.
- Fathers, more often than mothers, are the reported perpetrators of assaults against children and youth, regardless of the type of abuse or the child's age. In 1997, fathers were accused in 97% of sexual assaults and 71% of physical assaults. (Ref: Ontario Women's Network on Custody and Access, OWNCA)

Violence Against Women in Relationships

- In 88% of all violent incidents, males are identified as the suspects; half of all incidents involve a male perpetrator and a female victim (Johnson, 1996).
- Of persons charged, 98% of sexual assaults are by men and 86% of violent crimes are committed by men (Johnson, 1996).
- Women are almost 8 times more likely to be victimized by a spouse than are men. Women with disabilities face a 2 to 5 times greater risk for abuse and victimization than their non-disabled counterparts (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- 30% of women currently or previously married have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence at the hands of a marital partner (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- 21% of women abused by a marital partner were assaulted during pregnancy; 40% of these women stated that the abuse began during their pregnancy (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- In a recent survey, 12% of women aged 18 to 24 reported at least one incident of violence by a marital partner in a one-year period, which is 4 times the national average. This suggests that young women are placed at greater risk (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- 45% of incidents of violence committed by a man against his wife resulted in injury to the wife (Statistics Canada, 1993).
- 44% of men who are violent toward their wife use weapons during the physical attack (Statistics Canada, 1993).
- Marital partnerships of 2 years or less have the highest rate of wife assault (Rodgers, 1994).

- One-third of women who were assaulted by a partner feared for their lives at some point during the abusive relationship (Rodgers, 1994).
- In almost two-thirds of wife assault cases, violence occurred on more than one occasion, and in 32% of the cases, more than ten times (Rodgers, 1994).
- 45% of women who experienced spousal violence indicated that they had suffered injury, and 43% of these women required medical attention (Rodgers, 1994).

Spousal Homicide

- In Canada, between 1974 and 1992, 1,435 women were murdered by their husbands. This is approximately 75 women murdered each and every year (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1994).
- "Spousal homicides increased in 2001 for the first time in six years" (Statistics Canada, 2002).
- "The number of men accused of killing their current wife or ex-wife rose from 52 in 2000 to 69 in 2001 in Ontario" (Statistics Canada, 2002).
- "In total, 52% of all female victims and 8% of all male victims in 2001 were killed by an individual with whom they had an intimate relationship at one time, either through marriage or dating" (Statistics Canada, 2002).
- "Most multiple-victim homicides and murder-suicides were family-related, and the vast majority of accused persons in these types of incidents were male" (Statistics Canada, 2002).
- Male spouses constitute 67% of family members who kill their female partners (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- Over the past two decades, 3 times more wives than husbands were killed by their spouses (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- Young wives are at the greatest risk of spousal homicide. In the 1990s, women under the age of 25 who were married, separated, or in common-law relationships were killed at a rate of 29 per million (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- In 56% of spousal homicides from 1991 to 1997, there was a history of reported domestic violence between victims and perpetrators (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- Between 1974 and 1992, the rate for women killed by their husbands while separated was 6 times higher than the rate for women killed by their husbands while co-residing (Kong, 1996).
- Evidence from various sources suggests that a large majority of wife killings are precipitated by: a man accusing his partner of sexual infidelity; by her decision to terminate the relationship; and/or by his desire to control her (Wilson and Daly, 1994).

Stalking/Criminal Harassment

- Of harassment incidents reported to police in 1994-95, 8 in 10 victims were female, and 9 in 10 of the accused were male (Kong, 1996).
- "Between 1991 and 1999, police were aware of previous domestic violence in 74% of homicides perpetrated by ex-husbands, 57% of homicides perpetrated by common-law husbands and 41%

perpetrated by husbands in legal marriages" (Hotton, 2001).

- "Women face a heightened risk of spousal homicide after marital separation" (Hotton, 2001).
- Female victims are most frequently stalked by a current or former partner: 39% by an ex-husband; 2% by a current husband; and 17% by a current/former boyfriend (Kong, 1996).
- Previous violence is reported in 50% of criminal harassment cases involving current or former partners (Kong, 1996).
- Criminal harassers usually follow, watch, or make contact with their victims at the victim's home or place of work (Kong, 1996).
- Victims decline to lay charges in 1 in 6 incidents (Kong, 1996).
- In 20% of court cases where criminal harassment charges are dropped, they are done so at the victim's request or because she is reluctant to take part in the prosecution (Kong 1996).

Responses to Violence Against Women In Relationships

- The 1993 National Survey on Violence Against Women found that police were informed of about 26% of wife assault cases. Police responded to 84% of the cases reported to them, but charges were laid in only 28% of the cases (Rodgers, 1994).
- The 1993 National Survey also found that, in 45% of the cases, male violence decreased or stopped following police intervention. In 40% of the cases there was no change in the men's behaviour, while in 10% of the cases male violence increased (Rodgers, 1994).
- 29% of women in shelters had reported the most recent incident of abuse to the police, thus only 1 in 4 women actually had contact with the criminal justice system (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- 74% of women who reported an incident to the police indicated that they had left or stayed away from their partner, compared to only 18% who did not report the incident to the police. This may well mean that most women call the police when they have decided to end the relationship (Rodgers, 1994).

Transition Houses and Shelters

- According to the 1997-1998 Transition Home Survey, there were 470 shelters for abused women across Canada (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- 85% of abused women in shelters are seeking refuge from someone with whom they had an intimate relationship (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- Over 80% of women who use shelters have suffered an injury at some point during an abusive relationship. Sixty three percent (63%) of abused women in shelters have at some point been injured severely enough to seek medical attention (Trainor, 1999).
- Women who feared for their lives at some point during the relationship are more likely to have left their partner (57%) than those who did not (36%) (Rodgers, 1994).
- 90,792 women and dependent children were admitted to 413 shelters for

battered women across Canada in 1997-98 (Trainor, 1999).

- 56% of women escaping abusive situations are admitted with children, and many of these women are protecting their children from abuse (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- "The majority of children accompanying their mothers to shelters were very young: 41% were under 5 years of age and 32% were 5-9 years of age" (Dauvergne and Johnson, 2001).
- Women whose children had witnessed the violence were twice as likely to leave their homes (60%) than in cases where the children had not witnessed the violence (30%) (Rodgers, 1994).
- 9 out of 10 women who had contact with a shelter reported that it had been very or somewhat helpful (Trainor, 1999).
- 77% of women who leave their partners stay with friends or relatives; 13% go to transition houses or shelters; 13% move into places of their own; and 5% stay in hotels (Rodgers, 1994).
- Almost 75% of women who leave or stay apart eventually return home to their partners. The reasons they give for returning are: for the sake of the children (31%); to give the relationship another chance (24%); because their partner promises to change (17%); or because of lack of money or housing (9%) (Rodgers, 1994).

Effects of Spousal Violence on Children

- 4 in 10 women who experience violence report that their children also witness the violence. This means that one million Canadian children have witnessed violence by their fathers against their mothers (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- In 52% of violent relationships in which children witnessed the violence, the woman feared for her life; and in 61% of these relationships, she was injured by her partner (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- Between 80 and 90% of children in homes where there is spousal violence are aware of and affected by the violence (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- Child behaviours associated with witnessing family violence include aggression and internalization of problems, with negative effects on social and academic development (Fitzgerald, 1999).
- As a result of the "generational cycle of violence", women currently in violent marriages were 3 times as likely as women in non-violent marriages to state that their fathers-in-law were violent to their own wives, and were twice as likely to have witnessed their own fathers assaulting their mothers (Rodgers, 1994).

These statistics are adapted from The Freda Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children and the Ontario Women's Network on Child Custody and Access (OWNCCA) Lobby Materials.

REFLECTIONS ON MULTIPLE OPPRESSION

The Uniqueness of The Aboriginal Experience In Canada – A Key Informant Interview[30]

Interview with Deborah Chansonneuve

> *"Have open hearts and open spirits to hear and not just condemn…just caution them to listen carefully and hear what our people have to say." (Survivor of a residential school)*
>
> In summarizing the interview, with Deborah Chansonneuve, this author stated… *'So we are looking at expanding the lens of non-Aboriginal women to include the voices of women who historically have been marginalized…'*
>
> Ms. Chansonneuve response was *"Well that would be your way of putting it. I would say it this way. That we are improving the ears of non- Aboriginal women so that they can hear the voices that have always been there."*

Historical trauma is defined as cumulative trauma – collective and compounding emotional and psychic wounding both over the life span and across generations" (Niederland, 1989). It involves a constellation of features identified in the literature on complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It is associated with the reaction to massive generational group trauma, "…historical unresolved grief involves the profound, unsettled bereavement that results from generations of devastating losses…"

Anthropologists suggest that the spoken languages can measure cultural survival of Indigenous peoples. In Canada only four of the original sixty languages are considered viable – Dakota, Cree, Inukitute and Ojibway (Davis, 2001). No group in Canada has suffered such atrocities as our Aboriginal sisters and brothers.[31]

Many of the problems in the Aboriginal community are believed to be directly connected to generations of abuse and the cumulative impact of unacknowledged, untreated post-traumatic stress responses. The historical trauma is rooted in first contact with the Europeans who colonized Aboriginals by forcibly imposing European cultural practices and values on them, stealing their land and resources, shaming them for being 'savages' and forcibly removing their children by placing them in residential schools. The first residential school opened in the 1840s in Ontario. By 1920, there were 76 schools operated by the Roman Catholic, Anglican and United Churches, with the last one officially closing in the early 1980s. The stated purpose was to assimilate Aboriginal children into European culture – to 'educate' them and to 'civilize' them.[32]

Testimonies from survivors of residential schools disclose brutal tales of mistreatment, including sexual and physical abuse, psychological terrorism preventing them from speaking their languages, forcing them to cut their hair, refusing them the right to practice their traditions and ultimately systematically brainwashing them to reject everything about their culture and their heritage, including their parenting skills. By the 1900s, as many as forty-two percent

[30] Sources for this section were gleaned from Claudette Dumont-Smith, Aboriginal Health Consultant and a key informant interview with Deborah Chansonneuve, Independent Consultant with the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, Ottawa, Ontario.

[31] Martin-Hill, *Indigenous Women's Knowledge:Empowerment* vs. *Victimology* Presentation December 5, 2001

[32] Aboriginal Nurses' Association of Canada Conference Proceedings, Ottawa, Ontario

(42%) of these children were dying before the age of sixteen.[33]

> *Residential schools taught self-hate. That is child abuse… Too many of our people got the message and passed it on. It is their younger generations that appear before you [in court] (The Justice System and Aboriginal People – The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission).*

Generations of children were returned to their homes at the age of 16 filled with shame and self-hatred, little capacity for attachment, no respect for their culture, their traditions, or their elders. Many were returned, only to be parented by adults who too were unparented and filled with similar propaganda. That alcohol would become the medication of choice is not at all surprising. Introduced by the Europeans to trick innocent Aboriginal leaders into signing unethical and immoral land treaty agreements, alcohol stayed on in most communities, numbing the trauma of betrayal and shame.

In addition to such mistreatment and cruelty, Aboriginal people were imprisoned in 'reserves', their liberty denied and their own form of governance replaced by the *Indian Act*. They were made wards of the state and required to have a pass, signed by the Indian agent (a Federal government employee), in order to go off the reserve. When apartheid was created in South Africa, they came to Canada to see how to do it. Few know that Canada provided a model to the world on how to segregate an indigenous people. Natives could only grow crops that were approved by the Indian agent in a specific size garden, and could only sell a certain amount, approved again by the Indian agent.

Life on a reserve was a life of poverty – substandard housing, no running water, no schools, and until recently no health services. Generations of a people were treated like prisoners in their own land, usurped of their agency and treated like children by authorities who treated them with contempt and great disrespect. This colonization continues under the current *First Nations Government Act*.

Racism is a reality that most Aboriginal men and women face daily. In a recent report, incarcerated women said:

> *The critical difference is racism. We are born to it and spend our lives facing it. Racism lies at the root of our life experiences. The effect is violence, violence against us, and in turn our own violence (The Justice System and Aboriginal People – The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission).*

For non- Aboriginal women to talk about a gender framework to explain violence against women is, to Aboriginal women, a woefully limiting (and offensive) concept. It shows a lack of understanding of their traditional ways of healing – ways that approach healing systemically so that individual healing occurs in the context of healing families, communities and nations.

> *I think it's more that healing the individual can only happen in the context of healing the family, community and nation – it's a 4 component/Medicine Wheel balanced approach to healing – because the trauma is due to disconnection from family and heritage – from self-criticism and shame due to culture and race, the healing of one requires the healing of all – just as we don't heal women first as individuals, then as a group – we heal women in the context of reclaiming the power and pride in being female.*

[33] *Ibid*

The truths of the Aboriginal people living in Canada today include the following painful realities:[34]

Poverty

- 40% of single Aboriginal mothers earn less than $12,000 per year compared to 22% in the general population.
- The rate of Aboriginal unemployment is 26%, or 3 times the national rate.
- 39% rely on social assistance, over 4 times the national average.
- 47% of the Aboriginal population has an annual income of less than $10,000 compared to 27% of other Canadians. The relationship of poverty to health and chronic health conditions dramatically increases the rates of disability in Aboriginal communities.

Family Breakdown

- 12% of Aboriginal families are headed by a parent under 25 compared to 3% in the general population.
- 27% of Aboriginal families are headed by a single parent compared to 12% in the general population.
- Nationally, 4% or 1 in 20 Aboriginal children were in the custody of Child & Family Service agencies in 1996-97.

Education

- 73.3% of Aboriginal Peoples aged 15 to 49, left high school before completing Grade 12; only 25% of those aged 15 to 24 who leave the system, return to high school; another 13.4% take adult upgrading and 63% do not return at all.
- 3% of Aboriginal Canadians have a university degree compared to 12% of the general population.

Incarceration

- The chance that a 16-year-old Aboriginal male youth will be imprisoned at least once by the age of 25 is 70%.
- The rate of incarceration of Aboriginal men is 11 times that of the general population of men.
- The rate of incarceration of Aboriginal women is 250 times the rate of the general population of women.[35]

Addictions

- 97% of the 1,800 clients served annually by Wabano Centre's Homelessness Program suffer from addictions. Of these, 100% had compounding medical problems such as Diabetes, Hep C, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, or depression

[34] The Health of Aboriginal Women, Health Canada

[35] Figures from the Homeless Project Draft: Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, Ottawa, Ontario

- The mortality rate for Aboriginal women in Canada is 3 times that of their Canadian counterparts. It is 5 times higher for Aboriginal women between the ages of 25-44.
- Hospital admissions resulting from alcohol- related accidents are 3 times higher for Aboriginal women than the Canadian average.
- Suicide rates for the Aboriginal population are higher than those of the non-Aboriginal population in nearly every age category.
- The suicide rate for Aboriginal women during the period 1989-1993 was 3 times higher compared to non-Aboriginal women.

Family Violence

Several older studies have determined that the rates of violence against Aboriginal women are significantly higher than in the non-Aboriginal population (Breaking Free; Changing the Landscape, Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women). In more recent studies that examined the issue of violence in Canadian society, these facts remain unchanged (1999 General Social Survey (GSS); Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CSS); Homicide Survey; Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)).

Information derived from these more recent studies/surveys found that:

- Aboriginal women face a higher risk of being assaulted by a spouse. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of victims of spousal assault are females.
- About one-half of the Aboriginal peoples (male and female) who were assaulted stated that a child had witnessed the incident (1999 GSS survey).
- Twenty-five percent (25%) of Aboriginal women had been assaulted by a current or past spouse as compared to 8% for the non-Aboriginal female population (1999 GSS survey).
- Children less than 15 years of age were harmed or threatened in about 10% of the cases of spouse abuse against women and in 4% of the spouse abuse assaults against men (1999 GSS survey) [36]
- About one-half (48%) of the Aboriginal victims of spousal assault were victims of life-threatening violence (i.e. they were physically beaten, choked, threatened with a gun or knife) as compared to 31% for the non-Aboriginal group (1999 GSS).
- Thirty-seven percent (37%) of Aboriginal women were victims of emotional abuse compared to 18% for the non-Aboriginal victims of this form of abuse. (1999 GSS).
- Between 1991-1999, the homicide rate for Aboriginal women was more than 8 times higher than that of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Homicide Survey).

[36] In 1991, a national study on family violence in Aboriginal communities found that women and children less than 15 years of age suffer the most abuse (Phase I – National Family Violence Survey – Indian and Inuit Nurses of Canada, 1991).

- The majority of Aboriginal people from the inner core of four large Canadian cities who were interviewed stated that they had been exposed to abuse as children, and 88% of the whole sample had been a victim of either childhood or adult violence (Seen But Not Heard: Native People in the Inner City. Justice Canada).

This very current information shows that violence in the Aboriginal community including homicide, remains very high and well above the national average for all types of abuse. Based on these facts, it is apparent that more Aboriginal children are exposed to violence in the home than are non-Aboriginal children in Canadian society. (Source: Exposure to Violence in the Home: Effects on Aboriginal Children. Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada)

Claudette Dumont-Smith, in a well-documented discussion paper, states that:

> *"In 1998, for a sixth consecutive year, Canada was named as the number one (best) place to live in the world by the United Nations. Based on the Human Development Index, which assesses the economy, educational attainment and life expectancy of a group/population, quality of life can be measured. When the same parameters were used to study the living conditions of the registered Indian population, the listing of Canada fell from first to 60th place."*

Ms. Dumont-Smith goes further to suggest that all of the previously mentioned hardships are the 'norm' in which Aboriginal people live. In some communities this is made even worse due to lack of health and social servicing, educational and work opportunities, policing and geographic isolation. She states: "Without a doubt, these conditions worsen or foster violence in the family and the most vulnerable victims are women and children."[37]

On a more hopeful note, Aboriginal people can still remember and talk about a time when women and men were equal, when prior to colonization, women chose the chiefs, and women could impeach a chief if he was not speaking with the voice of the people. Their society was constructed for gender balance; when you have men as chiefs but women choosing them and impeaching them, you have made gender balance a central part of your social structure. Women were certainly medicine people. Women were certainly elders. Women were as sacred and as important and meaningful as anyone else. So they have a history and cultural practices and customs of which they are immensely proud. Part of their work is re-claiming the role of women, by reclaiming culture and cultural beliefs. This is happening right across the country.

When the federal government apologized for the abuse of children in residential schools, it started up a three hundred and fifty million dollar fund for trauma recovery. Aboriginal people can now apply for this compensation. This fund is governed by an all Aboriginal Board of Directors. They are the ones who determine where the funding should go. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation is funding programmes to help former students of residential schools heal from the abuse. A large component of that process necessarily involves cultural reclamation.

In 2002, Ms. Chansonneuve worked with the R.C.M.P. and the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, to create a National

[37] Source: *Exposure to Violence in the Home: Effects on Aboriginal Children*. Prepared by Claudette Dumont-Smith, RN, BScN, MPA. Prepared for the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada

Action Plan for the Prevention of Aboriginal Violence. They conducted focus groups involving Aboriginal frontline workers, health nurses (the frontline workers in remote outposts serving native communities in the north), and frontline R.C.M.P. workers, who are often the first responders. They also included elders, traditional people and counselors of abusive men, as well as women from native shelters. They held a series of consultations on what was their vision for ending violence. What did they want to see and what would a National Action Plan to end Aboriginal family violence look like? The result was a very extensive, very culturally specific plan, based on the information from these focus groups.

All women committed to ending violence will benefit from the work and wisdom of Aboriginal women but first they must do their own homework – learn about Aboriginal culture, read their educational materials, join them in their trainings and conferences, listen to their stories. Non-Aboriginal women must use their privilege to assist their Aboriginal sisters to access the funds they require to do their work the Aboriginal way. All of our actions support a shared vision to end violence against women and the more women who join this circle, the better the strategies we collectively create.

It is important to emphasize that Aboriginal issues cannot be subsumed into a larger (western) approach. Any work to end Aboriginal family violence or assess issues such as impacts of the backlash, must be Aboriginal-driven. That is the essence of good medicine.

When shame and betrayal and trauma is the direct result of cultural genocide then the only way to restore self-esteem and promote healing is by restoring pride in culture and the only way to restore pride in culture is by reclaiming the wisdom of culture. Deborah Chansonneuve

Confronting Our History: Ending Our Silence[38]

By Fran Odette, MSW

In making efforts to change the systemic response to women and children with disabilities in the criminal justice system, it is essential that we understand the historical context from which the concept of "disability" emerges.

"Disability" and "handicap" are terms often used interchangeably but have very different meanings. Disability is often referred to as the mental or physical impairment or restriction experienced by an individual, while handicap refers to the social restrictions or barriers faced by an individual within her/his environment. Within this framework, we see how the social environment can limit an individual with a disability, rather than identifying the disability as being the sole reason for a person's difficulties.

The social construction of disability serves many purposes and creates a framework by which we can now begin to understand the reality of isolation and alienation, which leads to the experience of violence and abuse in our lives. What I mean by this is that, if society were truly accessible and accommodating in all aspects, then it would make no difference that one conducted their life using a wheelchair, was blind or labeled with a psychiatric disability. In exploring the social construction of disability, there is a mistaken belief that people with disabilities regardless of age, need to be taken care of.

We live in a society that views women, children and other adults with disability as "strange" and so very "different" because society keeps us hidden away. We have been segregated in special schools and special programs designed to pacify many of the non-disabled society into thinking they have done enough. "Disability" as a phenomenon makes people confront their fear of suffering. This fear centres on the cultural obsession which is based on aesthetic conventions of "wholeness" and how a body should look and function. This attitude underlies the horror instilled by physical difference (Baird, 1992).

Baird (1992) suggests that attitudes vary towards disability across cultures and historical space. In some cultures, people with disabilities were seen as burdens on the community resulting in our expulsion from the community or our demise. In other societies, people with certain types of disabilities were perceived as having divine possession (Baird, 1992). Although many were devalued and stigmatized, many still remained in their communities. Begging as an early entrepreneurial endeavor was the fate for many.

Many of us are aware that with industrialization came many changes. Mass production was geared toward the non-disabled, white, heterosexual male norm. Baird states that "Speed and uniformity were central to profitability – fast moving machinery did not allow for difference or disability among the workforce (pg.5). During the Industrial Revolution, people with disabilities became expendable workers, a class of "industrial rejects" – and the city became an unsafe place for the individual with a disability.

[38] (Excerpted and adapted with permission from a keynote speech presented at the Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse – "Addressing the Issues: Dispelling the Myths: Conference, Toronto – February 2-3, 1995, Conference in 1995)

In order to deal with this, a solution was sought which marked a horrendous and threatening time in the history of our lives. We will later see that this history continues to replay itself in present day under the guise of "funding cuts" and "special programs". The early part of the 19th Century marks the birth of the institution – a safe, caring place where people with disabilities could be taken care of and forgotten about. Sociologist Vic Finkelstein sees this era as a time when "cripples disappeared and disability was created" (Baird, 1992, p.5). "Disability" as an entity becomes socially constructed and used as a tool by which to justify the need to keep us "separate". Keeping us isolated and separate gives greater weight to viewing people with disabilities as "less than", a condition that is essential to an increased sense of vulnerability.

The institution was seen as a viable solution and a caring alternative for families who may have struggled with the decision to give up the caregiving responsibilities of their loved ones with a disability. How else could it be done when many family members were required to work long, tedious hours in the factories and take care of their relatives living with disabilities at the same time. Disability became stigmatized and a means by which "victim blaming" ran rampant. Disability became a "thing" of shame (Galloway, 1980).

The institution provided a means by which people with disabilities were kept out of sight (shielding the non-disabled from having to deal with their own fears and prejudices about imperfection and difference) and out of the mainstream society (absolving many from taking responsibility to collectively work on providing a means by which people with disabilities could participate in all aspects of the community). Those of us who were labeled with a psychiatric disability or developmental disability served as expendable labor – seeing little if any of the profit from the efforts of our production.

Research suggests that shelter, protection and charity now replaced the notion that the institution was place of learning (Galloway, 1980). In 1893, the Custodial Asylum for Unteachable Idiots was established in Rome, New York. Instead of preparation for society, the theme shifted to one of *protection from society*, shelter from the "unbearable stress and persecution lurking in communities". Large institutions were erected in locations outside of towns, adding further to the isolation and separateness inherent within these settings. Within this model, however, there was a belief that charity is not given unconditionally. Wolfensberger speaks of how pity and charity "may create resentment especially if the sufferer does not 'get well', resentment may lead to brutalization". Thus arises another era which justified the segregation of those viewed as "defective".

Often these institutions were perfect breeding grounds for experimentation and abuse. Records show that this was particularly evident for women and men who were labeled "insane" or "feeble-minded", while children and youth were viewed as "good candidates". Even the labels were reductionist in our experience. The institution provided an ideal opportunity for doctors to gain access to our bodies and our minds (Galloway, 1980).

It is suggested that during this era, doctors and other professionals of medicine *colonized* disability much like a country

might be colonized, and turned people with disabilities into material for research and exploitation. Medicine was presented as progressive, humanitarian and helpful but as you read our history and the histories of other marginalized communities, you will realize otherwise. Medicine professed to save and extend lives, however, rarely did it indicate that this would occur at the expense of those deemed less valued.

The traditional model of medicine has seen the goal of working with people with disabilities to make us as "normal" as possible. The model presented for what constitutes "normal" is based on a patriarchal, white, male defined standard that legitimizes its power based on a model which strives to eradicate imperfection. Many people with disabilities have undergone painful and intrusive procedures and interventions in efforts to remove the label of "disability" and to bring them closer to proximity to a world where the perfect body is valued. In recent years, bio-technology and new reproductive technologies, including pre-natal screening, are tools utilized to eliminate disability by ensuring that fetuses with disability or known health conditions are not born (Baird, 1992). Pre-natal genetic screening and genetic engineering could never eliminate disability as only a small percentage of disability is genetic. It is suggested that more than "85% of adult disability is caused after age 13, and more than 90% of infant disability is due to social causes such as poverty, malnutrition and diseases" (Baird, 1992).

Thoughout the years, the perception of disability as personal problem or personal tragedy has been used by non-disabled society as a way of absolving itself from community responsibilities. If disability is seen as inherently "bad" then there is not much society can do but offer charity and pity.

It is apparent that when uncovering the history of people living with disabilities common themes arose which helped create opportunities and the environment for the exploitation and abuse of women, children and other adults with disabilities (Galloway, 1980). Galloway outlines these themes as follows:

segregation – used as a justification to remove those classified "defective" from their families and community;

congregation by type – people with disabilities were no longer seen as "individuals" but were seen only in the context of our disabilities;

the single solution – a justification for a model which was viewed as the only viable option which was designed to accommodate those individuals who were labeled "defective"; and

dominance by professionals – a theme which has been prominent throughout our history – the professionals called the "shots" and those who benefited were those of the organized elite – social workers, doctors, facility superintendents, researchers, etc. Those who suffered were those individuals who held no power.

When we look back, history reveals itself to the stark reality that patterns of abuse are common, ranging from the mistreatment to dehumanization of many groups demonstrated in the social policies directed toward people of colour, Aboriginal peoples, women, gays and lesbians, Jews, children and people living with disabilities

(Galloway, 1980). Galloway suggests the process that leads to the victimization, objectification and brutal treatment of people living with disabilities involves various steps – these steps do not have to be taken in sequence, but one makes the next much easier. These steps are:

- **Stereotyping** – different than "us".

- **Equating disability or difference to that which is 'deviant'** – "difference" whatever it may constitute gives weight to fear, hate and the devaluing of those labeled so.

- **Dehumanization** – which results in seeing "difference" as being outside the realm of membership called "humanity". Dehumanization or stripping one of her/his humanity must be constructed and reinforced. This has been played out a number of different times before our eyes as a result of the formation of Hitler's racial ideology. In order to ensure the continuity of the German race as superior, it was crucial that elements detrimental to its integrity and strength were eliminated.

Breggin (1993) states that "German psychiatrists proposed the extermination of mental patients before Hitler came into power. Then in Nazi Germany, organized psychiatry implemented involuntary eugenics, sterilization and euthanasia, ultimately killing up to 100,000 German mental patients" (p. 133). Although Hitler withdrew official approval from the euthanasia program, "…local state hospital doctors continued killing patients within the state hospitals themselves, destroying another 700,000 inmates" (Breggin, 1993, p.134).

Medical murder and eugenics found support in American psychiatry. At the 1941 annual meeting of the American Psychiatry Association, Foster Kennedy, an influential American psychiatrist and neurologist called for the extermination of incurably, severely retarded children over the age of five. He concluded, "So the place for euthanasia, I believe, is for the completely hopeless defective: nature's mistake, something we hustle out of sight, which should not have been seen at all" (Breggin, 1993, p. 140).

Dehumanization and brutalization are key factors, which have contributed to and been the basis of one of the most horrific times of civilized history. By reducing people to subhuman states, "we are not obligated to treat them with the same rules of civilized conduct we expect of and accord other humans" (Galloway, p.12).

It is hoped that we have learned from these atrocities and can move forward to a more "just" view of the world, hoping never to repeat history. However, some themes or ideologies are stronger and more prevalent than we are led to believe, making it easier to hold onto than let go (Galloway, 1980). Although the motive has changed, the methods have become more subtle. Those who were sterilized to preserve racial purity, sent to the gas chambers are now allowed to die for their own good. Children with severe disabilities are prime targets for both recent trends in passive and active euthanasia (Sobsey, 1994). While active euthanasia is more likely to result in criminal charges, in either case, sympathies often lie with the offender and punishment is mild or nonexistent (Sobsey, 1994). "Quality of life" issues become factors in deciding whether one will be allowed to live or die. Sobsey and Schaffer (1991) state that although the

arguments are not quite so blatant, the message is still the same, "the quality of life rationale provides a good reason instead of a 'real' one and the real one is to get rid of the baby" for the convenience of the caregiver and society as a whole (Sobsey, 1994, p. 124).

The challenge before all of us is to look at our own attitudes which have been shaped by history – a history that has valued some lives over others. Remembering that people with disabilities' attitudes about self has also been influenced by this history. Given the vulnerability of persons with disability in this society, the test for us is to match and exceed the efforts that have been made in the area of violence prevention, treatment and the judiciary for non-disabled people who are survivors of abuse.

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Some of Our Voices – Experiences of South Asian Immigrant Women

By Tahmena Bokhari[39]

I present here my critical response to the gender-neutral discourse of woman abuse. My views are reflective of my social location as a Canadian-born South Asian woman, feminist, social service worker, and community activist. I have worked with hundreds of South Asian immigrant and refugee women and women of South Asian descent. I have attempted to incorporate some of their voices here. As a South Asian woman, I feel that our collective voice is, and our individual voices have, often been left out of most talks around domestic violence. Such "talks" turn into formalized discussions at committees of local organizations strategizing on effective responses. However, since the people at the table are often of (on the most part) an ethnically homogenous group and are using a discourse that echoes that homogeneity, the result of their initiatives (research, programming, outreach, training for service providers, counselling approaches, etc.) reflect and promote an analysis of woman abuse that is exclusive to their homogeneity. This exclusive analysis is problematic for two main reasons that I will discuss here: One, there is a direct negative impact on immigrant women who are seeking a framework to understand their experience of abuse and are reaching out to front-line workers. I will focus here on women of South Asian descent and immigrant and refugee women from the South Asian region. Various immigrants may also experience a similar negative impact. Two, the products of exclusionary "talks" demonstrate the larger problem with the Violence Against Women (VAW) movement itself by perpetuating the very basic elements of patriarchy that we are trying to eradicate. I will attempt here to include the voices of some South Asian women in how the movement can better respond to VAW. In order to have a truly anti-oppressive framework to our anti-violence work, we must understand the complex fashion in which race, ethnicity, religion, class, ableism, sexuality and gender intersect cross-culturally and among individuals in both the private and the public realm. Specifically, I will focus my argument here for not only a gender-based approach, but an approach that includes racism and ethnicity within the definition of patriarchy. It is imperative to remember throughout this paper that every woman is an individual and that we cannot use the examples of a few women of similar social locations (or even of the majority) to label, contextualize, or categorize, all women's experiences.

The Problem in Practice and the Impact on Women Seeking Answers

Exclusionary discourse has seeped its way into domestic violence training for front-line workers via training manuals, seminars, counselling techniques and programming. This can have tremendously dangerous impacts on minority and immigrant women that come into local community agencies for assistance and can act to counter the work of anti-oppression advocates and activists. Front-line workers, even if they may otherwise disagree, are often limited to use and work within patriarchal and racist domestic violence frameworks. Thus, counsellors themselves are not equipped with tools enabling them to work through

[39] This piece was written by Tahmena Bokhari, a member of the Gender Advisory Committee of the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (Durham Region).

various dimensions of racism and to pinpoint gender-neutral and racist discourse in everyday counselling sessions. This results in the silencing of anti-oppression and gender-based discourses. The following is an example of a conversation between a front-line worker and a young South Asian woman who is experiencing abuse by her immigrant father. This conversation exemplifies possible failures of front-line counsellors to practice an intersectional approach of ethnicity, race and gender.

> Front-line worker: So *tell me a little more about what is happening?*
>
> Client: *Well, in my culture it is o.k. for husbands and fathers to hit their wives and daughters. So you know my female relatives think it is o.k.*
>
> Front-line worker: So *what do you think? Do you agree with your relatives?*
>
> Client: *Oh No I don't think it is o.k. I mean just because I want to have some freedom and do what other Canadian girls do. It is not o.k. But women in my culture are very ungrateful, my mother and my aunts don't work you know. I mean my mother can say no when my father hits her, but she doesn't. She really does think it is o.k.*
>
> Front-line worker: So *it sounds like you have some different values and beliefs from your family.*
>
> Client: *Yes, very different. I like the Canadian way, but my parents want me to be like them.*
>
> Front-line Worker: It *sounds like your parents have not embraced this new culture as much as you have.*
>
> Client: *No. They have not. I have the right to have my own views don't I? I mean this is Canada, we are free here to think whatever we want. No one can beat you up for it!*
>
> Front-line worker: Yes, *that is right! You do have the right to think whatever you want. That is your right.*
>
> Client: *Yes, here that is my right!*

Although, this may be just one short dialogue out of many the counsellor may have with this client and recognizing that it may not be possible for front-line workers to provide longer term counselling, this dialogue is representative of common client-counsellor discussions and it is highly valuable for us to deconstruct it here. I must add here that it is helpful for the counsellor to ask the client her own interpretation of what is happening and that this may be a helpful conversation for a counsellor to initiate when first learning a client's story, however, the counsellor must do so only if she is committed to ensuring appropriate closure for the client and to investigate the following issues during successive sessions. There are various problems with the front-line worker's response and approach to helping the client contextualize her own experience. First, the gender-neutral concept of her mother *saying no if she wanted too* is

not addressed in this conversation. If the counsellor had utilized a gender-based analysis, the counsellor would have been able to address that this client's mother, being a woman, is at a certain disadvantage and risk to abuse, for many reasons including economic dependency. The counsellor also focused on *parents*, as if abuse does not have a gendered aspect. The client's *parents* embracing the "Canadian" culture, or not, has nothing to do with why her *father* is abusive. The gender-based approach can help service providers to focus on the overall power imbalances between men and women and to recognize how such imbalances can materialize into disadvantages for women in various areas, including language, employment, employability, income, and vulnerability to remaining in violent relationships.

Second, there was a complete absence of the intersectional analysis of gender, ethnicity and race. This analysis would have assisted the counsellor in pinpointing the mythical concept of domestic violence being an inherent aspect of *old* and *foreign* cultures. The counsellor perpetuated this myth when she focused on the parents *not having embraced the new culture* as an idea related to the client's immigrant father being abusive. I question whether the counsellor would have been quicker to dispel the myth that domestic violence is an *old* problem not relevant to *new* Canada or to "Canadian" women if the client was white and had "Canadian" parents? Another missing point is that the client's mother is in even more risk and vulnerable to remaining in an abusive relationship because of her ethnicity, race and "newcomer" status in Canada. The counsellor also encouraged the client to rely on her Canadian "rights" (something her mother is not doing and is thus viewed as giving permission) which do not always trickle down to substantive and cultural practice for the majority of "Canadian" women, white or otherwise. Even "Canadian" women are assaulted under the terms of *freedom* the counsellor has led the client to believe and the majority of women continue to be at risk.

The counsellor also failed to mention that this young South Asian client is (on the most part) not *just like* her Canadian friends. The counsellor left the young woman with the impression that she can do whatever other "Canadian" girls do if only her parents would let her, whereas the reality is that despite her parents' approval, a young woman of colour faces tremendous systemic barriers. The counsellor did not help this young woman to frame issues based on multiple forms of oppression or to take a race-ethnicity-gender analysis, an analysis that may have been most beneficial for the client to be self-empowered. Such an understanding by a counsellor can better assist the client to negotiate the power dynamics not just in her current situation with her parents, but with her friends, future intimate partners, and with those who may hold a position of power over her. Instead the counsellor re-enforced the client's own misconceptions of woman abuse, specifically those of woman abuse within her ethnic immigrant community, and has encouraged a dependence on "Canadian" systems, "Canadian" nationality, and "Canadian" people. The counsellor re-affirmed the abuser's justification for the abuse. However, I am sure that the counsellor would otherwise recognize that the abuse has nothing to do with being ungrateful, it has nothing to do with saying "no", it has nothing to do with not being employed, and it has nothing to do with being inside or outside of a certain culture. I am sure the counsellor otherwise recognizes

that most abusers use exactly such issues to mask the power imbalances which are the real root of woman abuse. The counsellor perpetuated the myth that abuse is inherent in the client's culture, the myth that men of colour are unable to control their physical urges, that women of colour are irrational as the clients female relatives are not logically working out their views, the myth in Canadian society that hitting is a value held in "other" cultures, the myth that South Asian women are docile, and the myth that to live free of abuse the client must separate from her community due to different values and do so by utilizing her "Canadian" rights. In addition, the counsellor did not indicate how systemic barriers can increase the client's vulnerability to remaining in an abusive relationship and this leaves the client with the false impression that if she only adapts the dominant Canadian culture and rejects the beliefs of the minority culture, then she will live a life free of abuse.

Furthermore, after such a conversation, the client is in a position where biased and mythical patriarchal and racist terminology and concepts (that she has heard while interacting with "Canadian" society) have been confirmed by an "expert", the front-line worker. The client is further using this discourse to self-analyze her problem and is taking on an analysis that is tainted by others and is not a full reflection of her own individual experience. The problem here is that the victim herself is now accepting, using and owning the terminology of patriarchy (which is oppressive with respect to gender as well as to race/ethnicity) and thus, is not able to advocate most effectively for herself and overcome the various forms of abuse she may be experiencing – domestic, systemic, racial and gendered. As stated earlier, it is very important to understand how the client herself frames her situation because it helps the counsellor to know where the client is in her journey away from the abuse. However, the counsellor must then help ensure the client to work toward a self-empowering framework, as too often clients walk away with misinformed understandings of woman abuse. bell hooks has written extensively on how often we use a language that is not our own, but we use a discourse that is contaminated, one that we have adopted, and one that is historically rooted in colonial and patriarchal ideologies (hooks, 1989: 161). In this way, many South Asian immigrant women, refugee women from South Asia and Canadian-born first/second generation South Asian women, who have attempted to utilize the results of exclusive "talks" and who have asked service providers for possible solutions to their domestic crisis, internalize the misconceptions and sometimes use such exclusionary discourse to analyze and convey their own personal experiences of abuse. In doing so, these women can become examples used by some to gain momentum for the patriarchal and racist analysis of domestic violence.

How, then, can a frontline worker help clients socially locate themselves and understand the systemic basis of their experience, when the front-line worker herself is working within an exclusive discourse? There have been initiatives to support immigrant and minority women specifically, and have lead to "culturally sensitive strategies". However, although the initial hope for these strategies may have been from an anti-oppressive framework, the way in which they have come to be practiced in the local 'domestic violence' agencies has resulted in re-affirming stereotypes and in further excluding immigrant women from the public sphere.

Many activists would like these strategies replaced with woman-centered approaches to front-line work which encourage treatment of every woman as an individual rather than as, automatically, a member of a certain *community*. These strategies must be re-visited, altered and improved and then mandated, not only in small under-funded local community centres, but within patriarchal and governmental agencies such as law enforcement and the court and legal systems. Front-line workers must first understand, integrate and apply to themselves an intersectional analysis that conveys the complex relationships among and between race, ethnicity, culture, religion, class, age, nationality, sexuality, able-ism, gender and other indicators of social location. They must then fully incorporate such a framework in every aspect of their work with women experiencing domestic abuse, from one on one counselling to group work to designing programs. Only when counsellors are able to work with their clients to map-out social locations, can both parties fully understand the larger systemic barriers that many women experience in their fight for a life without violence.

Attempting to Solve the Larger Problem in the VAW Movement

The dominant normative standard, in Canada, against which differences are scaled is white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class, Christian and of Canadian nationality. It is important, if not crucial, to recognize that these measures are not independent of each other, but that each category (race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc.) intersects with the other and that the measures become implicit in our culture, language, ideas, and stereotypes and then further become formalized and entrenched in our institutions. In this way, these normative constructions are universalized and continuously perpetuated. It is the manifestations of these patriarchal (including racist) normative ideologies that particularly marginalize South Asian immigrant and refugee women and Canadian-born South Asian women, who are also termed as women of colour.

From my experience as a women's counsellor, many South Asian immigrant women fleeing abuse feel that they have made a mistake when their partners are arrested. This can be for many reasons, including some of the following: The victim is now left without her interpreter, as her husband, in some cases, speaks better English than she does and was probably more educated than she was. She is now left without a car or a driver, as in most economically marginalized immigrant families the husband is the sole driver (if the family owns a vehicle). Transportation is now difficult for her especially if she has young children and/or does not speak English, and/or is not familiar with bus routes and streets. Immigrant women often have few extended family members to rely on for support because the majority of their families may live abroad. Many South Asian women have told me that they sometimes feel that they must not expose the abuse or else they will make all immigrants look bad. Many South Asian women say that their South Asian friends often refuse to believe a woman's allegations of abuse because friends only know the woman's husband as a charming "leader" in the community. Then, by the non-South Asian community, women often feel misunderstood and unable to fully communicate their needs, even in

cases where South Asian women are fluent in English.

Many immigrant women are not prepared or even know that their partner will be automatically charged by the police and arrested, and this can sometimes confirm for a victim what her husband has been telling her all along, “You don't know the world in Canada. You cannot handle it and it is not safe for you. You should just stay home and I will take care of it all for us.” Many women would claim that their husbands never behaved like this until they came to Canada. Many women feel that their husbands are under tremendous pressure to provide economical resources for their parental families in Canada and back home. Many women have indicated feeling severe guilt when they and their children had to watch their husbands being arrested. It is not surprising then, that when a South Asian victim of violence has witnessed racism against her husband, family or community and then her husband makes promises of a better future in return for ‘forgiveness’, she can be vulnerable to repeating the cycle of violence many times over. I have worked with several women who have gone back to their husbands and have faced even more abuse, but refused to have their partner arrested again due to the trauma of the first time around. Many women, who have gone back to their abusive husbands and took even worse beatings, stated to me that they would rather be abused by one person than by an entire system and a whole country of people. Thus, it is clear that woman abuse is a systemic problem, which places South Asian immigrant and refugee women at specific risk due to multiple forms of oppression.

The examples given above of the barriers South Asian women face are a result of inadequate support for immigrant and refugee women and women of colour in our multicultural society and the exclusionary framework of our service providing strategies. We have universalized the Western notion of masculinity and femininity, we have failed to undo the barriers all ethnic communities face that force them into marginalization from the public sphere, and we have continued to perpetuate racist stereotypes within our agencies, our services geared to domestic violence, and sadly even within the feminist movement. All of this has resulted in the positioning of South Asian women, especially the most economically disadvantaged immigrant women, to be the most vulnerable to remaining in abusive relationships.

In light of their experiences, many newcomer women have suggested that along with studying the government, geography and history of Canada for the citizenship test that upon arrival, newcomers should be taken through their Canadian rights and Canadian law, especially around definitions and consequences of abusive behaviour. Women have suggested that they and their families should be informed through a mandatory workshop of their rights, privileges and procedures to enforce such rights, so that they can make appropriate decisions when building a new life in Canada. Some women also want the option of not participating in the legal system altogether, but still want to get support for themselves. Some of these women feel that their issues cannot by nature be resolved via the patriarchal and hierarchical judicial system and that this system totally ignores the cultural, individualistic, personal, traumatic, and the emotional side of the whole experience of being victimized. Above all, South Asian immigrant and

refugee women and first-generation Canadian South Asian women, want to be included in the decision making process of policies that will directly effect their lives and shape their individual Canadian identities and collective identity as "South Asian".

South Asian women can be vulnerable to facing tremendous backlash from within their own circles and communities, which include prominent male members. I will never forget one young first-generation Canadian South Asian woman who said to me, *"I don't know what to believe. My counsellor at school told me that abuse is a crime in Canada and that is why we have 9-1-1 for anyone to call for help, but someone else told me 9-1-1 is bad for our community."* This exemplifies the mixed messages that South Asian women receive from within and external to their ethnic communities. Much of this is fueled by the reality of racism within the Canadian social, economic, cultural, judicial and political systems and particularly the political struggle of South Asians to establish themselves as a recognized "community" in Canada. Many male "leaders" of marginalized communities often use the presence of racism within the police force to claim that "their" women are lured into calling 9-1-1 under false pretenses. Many newcomer families hold the belief that the Canadian system does not value family. Immigrant women often receive the message that shelters are dirty places and not safe for "good Indian girls". South Asian women are often told by members within their ethnic community that feminism (defined as laws and systems protecting the rights of women such as 9-1-1) is for white women – women who don't care about family or culture. This is an example of backlash specifically within immigrant communities.

In order to address issues of backlash to the VAW movement and to gender-based initiatives, we must address the backlash women can face from within their own unique (ethnic, cultural, religious, geographic, etc) communities and backlash specific to each woman's individual social location. Such backlash includes the idea that women must be `taken care of by their husbands', but when a woman takes steps to leave an abusive husband, she is given the message that her values are misplaced. Agencies mandated to support victims of domestic violence who are provided with skills to establish gender-based strategies must also be given skills to develop and utilize the intersectional analysis of race and ethnicity along with gender. Service providers must be equipped with methods of recognizing the various ways in which women experience oppression and gender role differences across cultures. They must also understand the reasoning behind efforts to strengthen and maintain cultural heritage through cultural practice, religion, food, dress, language and family life.

Given the above, it is more likely that immigrant families may take on the "gender-neutral" analysis. Many immigrant families are struggling to maintain their ethnic, cultural and religious values from a socially marginalized position and because of the importance of family solidarity, they do not wish to embrace gender-based strategies for fear of hastening a break-down of their ethnic community and families. This is why it is crucial to have diverse women members of ethnic communities themselves lead the initiatives to help their communities locally and the VAW movement at large. These members must also continuously define their social positioning. Furthermore, we must remember that some women are more likely to "choose" not to report their abusive

partner and not be on board with feminist initiatives because they feel it will lead to further isolation and because of their unique experience of gender bias. This may also be the experience of many women who face multiple forms of oppression with respect to race, class, ability, ethnicity, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, religion, and geographical location. This means that better outreach must be done within ethnic groups by their own members about various types of feminism (i.e., Third World feminism, Black feminism, etc.). Lastly, all organizations and institutions, including the Children's Aid Society, law enforcement and the justice system, as a whole, must adopt a gender-race-ethnicity-based analysis and truly anti-oppressive strategies when responding to domestic assault calls. Ultimately, survivors of domestic assault, and women of all ethnicities, races, nationalities, religions, classes, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, cultures, and social locations must be invited to participate in the decision making process federally, provincially and regionally. And most importantly and perhaps as a first step, these women must be invited as decision-makers (not just as clients) locally into the small community agencies mandated to support victims of domestic violence.

In summary, the recommendations made from this paper are the following:

- Invite a diverse group of women to the table.
- Help support women of colour and immigrant and refugee women to be in a position of power where they can serve as leaders to their own communities and to all of our communities.
- Begin each project with an intersectional approach that includes recognition of privileges and disadvantages in terms of various factors including race, ethnicity, religion, culture, nationality, language, education, class, age, ableism, and sexuality along with gender.
- Begin each counselling session with socially locating yourself first and foremost and assisting the survivor in socially locating herself.
- Continuously challenge yourself, your co-workers and your agency in how best to apply this approach.
- Continuously work to socially locate yourself as your location is continuously changing and your understanding of the approach is continuously being refined.

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Disrupting the Norm: Deconstructing Whiteness and White Privilege

By Rai Reece[40]

Working with divergent women in the field of woman abuse presents many challenges. One of these challenges has been the discernible need to address issues of 'race' and racism, and white privilege. By contextualizing the variant ways in which white women and women of colour make sense of their lives and their life experiences, we explore an analytical framework that explores the dynamics of 'race', racism, and white privilege. 'Race' is an idea that emerges in a particular part in history. It is the idea that human beings can be divided into distinct groups and that these distinct groups have a set of characteristics that are located in their biology.

The idea of 'race' **shifts** and is located in different spaces – the way that 'race' is understood in Canada is different than the way it is understood in India, China or the United States. Ideologically, 'race' is tied to and interconnected with stereotypes, class, sexuality, and gender, and 'race' is socially constructed – that is to say that it exists by determining and designating "difference" – it is a social marker. Historically, the visibility of 'race' and who or what it defined was a signified label used for defining people of colour. In many instances, whiteness and the associated meanings that accompany the term and/or group of people or person was invisible.

In this regard, **Commonsense Racism** is the idea that the norm in society is white; it is the idea that white is not a colour and only those who are visibly of colour are of a particular 'race'. Commonsense racism is often invisible and difficult to detect. Whiteness, then, is often that which is taken for granted, and enacts the proliferation of the ideas of the dominant social, economic and cultural class. Whiteness is operational and strategic within our society. While these processes can operate in covert and overt ways, white privilege allows for white women to frame gender oppression as the primary oppression affecting all women. The purpose here is not to essentialize whiteness or white privilege. Rather this analysis is to explore and contextualize how white privilege reinforces a culture of domination and racism.

'Race' and racism are not theoretically defined in the same way. 'Race' is an idea that emerges in a particular part in history. It is the idea that human beings can be divided into distinct groups and that these distinct groups have a set of characteristics that are located in their biology. Racism structures people's lives. It affects ones employment advancement, access to education, access to housing, racism is the desire to categorize segments of the society and cast them as **different from the designated norm.** Racism involves issues of power and privilege, and is often institutionalized. When institutions subordinate a whole group of people by reinforcing rules and practices that don't look like racism, that in and of itself is racism. For example, streaming children of colour into basic or general education classes because they speak with an accent; using teaching material that portrays people of colour as savage or barbaric; municipalities only allowing certain people to purchase homes in particular areas; only observing particular holidays in organizations, etc., are all forms

[40] This piece was written by Rai Reece, Project Coordinator and member of the Gender Advisory Committee of the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (Durham Region).

and enactments of racism. Therefore in order to understand racism, one has to problematize the concept and construction of 'whiteness'.

Those who have access to white privilege see their benefits as natural and right. The concept of **meritocracy** is inherently connected to this idea. Therefore white privilege enacts the capitalist idea that if you work hard you get what you deserve. While working hard is an important concept in general, white privilege purports that if someone doesn't succeed it is because they haven't worked hard enough – this ideology blames the victim as opposed to looking at the systemic barriers that have been a major factor in that person's life. In the area of domestic violence and woman abuse, the value of working and thinking through whiteness is a critical framework that needs to be incorporated at all levels of one's respective work environment as well as in their life. It is important to acknowledge that one's position as a white person, or a person of a particular class will invariably have an affect on how your clients and your peers relate to you. This "status" carries with it an unwritten set of privileges that informs how a white woman sees her place in the world and makes sense of her positionality and the positionality of others.

Deconstructing the ideology of whiteness allows for one to contextualize how whiteness and white privilege produces and *re*-produces meaning. A critical analysis of the construction of whiteness allows for one to see as Ruth Frankenberg argues "how continual processes of slippage, condensation, and displacement among the constructs of 'race,' 'nation,' and 'culture' continue to **'unmark'** white people while consistently marking and racializing other" (1993, p. 6). The work of Frankenberg (1993, 1997), Vron Ware (1992) and Peggy McIntosh (1988) to name a few, have all been important to this analysis.

However, it is worth noting that whiteness studies are not a new theoretical domain. Racialized women and men have for years been espousing the importance of the need for white people and the politics of white privilege to be critiqued, analyzed and explored. For example Dionne Brand (1990) has argued that:

> I don't think it is up to black people to change white sensibilities. I think it is up to white people to do that. I think that racism is not our problem. I think it's a white problem. I think we can fight against it. I think it's our job to fight for good laws, to fight for equality, but in terms of doing things like changing white attitudes, white people have to do that work (quoted in Levine-Rasky, 2002, p. 1).

Similarly bell hooks (1984, 1992), Stuart Hall (1996), Angela Davis (1983) and Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) have all taken up this 'question of whiteness' within their work. The examination of whiteness, then, should not be seen as that which has been brought to the forefront of sociological, social science or cultural studies, by white cultural theorists alone. In other words, theories of whiteness and white positionality have been critiqued long before white people 'formally' named it as such.

Whiteness can be seen as a situational social identity. By situational I am referring to the ways in which whiteness does not exist outside of a social context. In racialized, sexualized, and gendered spaces, whiteness takes its cues from a multiplicity of hosts. It is everywhere and nowhere, because it is all

colours and no colour at the same time (Dyer, 1988).

Therefore I posit that whiteness should be conceptualized in relation to colonial legacy. This avenue of thought builds upon Vron Ware's question as to whether whiteness as a racialized category can ever been seen apart from centuries of colonial association and domination (Ware, 1996). Furthermore, Peter McLaren further argues that,

> Whiteness is a sociohistorical form of consciousness, given birth at the nexus of capitalism, colonial rule, and the emergent relationships among dominant and subordinate groups. Whiteness constitutes and demarcates ideas, feelings, knowledge, social practices, cultural formations, and systems of intelligibility that are identified with or attributed to white people and that are invested in by white people as "white"…As an ideological formation transformed into a principle of life, into an ensemble of social relations and practices, whiteness needs to be understood as conjunctural, as a composite term that shifts in denotative and connotative emphasis, depending on how its elements are combined and on the contexts in which it operates (1998).

For white women, whiteness operates in ways that become part of their construction of an identity for themselves in the face of political, social, racial and economic strife. In this sense, whiteness becomes a permanent marker with which white women can measure themselves against that which they are not. For racialized women, whiteness emerges as a positionality where they have to navigate and negotiate the variant ways in which **their primary oppressions are often negated at the expense of white privilege**. Unpacking theories of whiteness, then, can be seen as one response in an effort to begin the difficult process of dismantling racism and racist ideology.

In *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness,* Ruth Frankenberg (1993) states that whiteness is a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. The naming of whiteness is important "because it makes room for the linkage of white subjects to histories not encompassed by, but connected to, that of racism [specifically to] histories of colonialism and imperialism (Frankenberg, 1993, in Back and Solomos, 1999, p. 451). Frankenberg illuminates the importance of how the content of white women's lives fuels the many ways in which they may see others and possibly even themselves. This is explicitly connected to the "meaning" associated with whiteness, class,[41] and the racial status quo.

The relationship between power, knowledge and whiteness is evident in the myriad of ways in which 'white' is not seen as 'raced.' There are multiple levels of discomfort that I would argue are apparent when white women critique whiteness. Firstly, there is the notion of an avoidance of one's whiteness. It may be easier for a white woman to *not* name herself as "white" in order to *not* be seen as racist or employing

[41] While a discussion of the politics of class is important to this discussion, the scope of this section does not permit an in depth critical examination of the issue. I do not negate the importance of this discourse. Class politics should be seen as an issue that also implicates and involves "working within the terrain of whiteness."

racial attitudes. It may be easier to understand racism in relation to the other, maintaining that racism is a problem for people of colour and not white people. In any effort, naming whiteness is always about naming and locating **dominance**. White women's relationship to privilege and power has socially benefited them historically and contemporarily. Their dominance as "Imperial Mothers" or "chaste colonial benefactors" has played a central role in their whiteness not being named or seen, but solidified. Those roles were not *formally* named as part of the construction of whiteness, yet those roles were *implicit* in the construction of whiteness. The importance of this concept cannot be understated:

> To speak of the "construction of whiteness" asserts that there are locations, discourses, and, material relations to which the term "whiteness" applies…. Naming "whiteness" displaces it from unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance. Among the effects on white people both of race, privilege and of the dominance of whiteness are their seeming normativity, their structured invisibility…. To speak of whiteness is…to emphasize that dealing with racism in not merely an option for white people – that rather racism shapes white people's lives and identities in a way that is inseparable from other facets of daily life (Frankenberg, 1993, in Back and Solomos, 1999, p. 451)

Moreover according to Alison Bailey, white women who face the "*dilemma of white privilege awareness* [are] trapped in the awkward position of knowing that it is both impossible to dispose of [white] privilege and impossible to take advantage of it without perpetuating the systems of domination we wish to demolish" (Bailey, 1999). Bailey's assertion is indicative of how whiteness and white (colonial) privilege cannot escape an association with oppression and domination.

This discussion has illuminated the importance of naming whiteness and white privilege in an effort to examine how whiteness occupies an ambiguous position in our society. The enactment of whiteness works in tandem with privileged white women's social, cultural, economic and political understanding of themselves and of Others. In order to work towards dismantling racism there needs to be an acknowledgement of white privilege. In our work environments and personal social lives, words and actions that are racist need to be confronted and addressed; concerns raised by co-workers of colour needn't be dismissed or trivialized or they shouldn't be accused of playing the race "card" because this kind of behaviour silences an individual. Racism breeds hatred and a continual cycle of racism. The refrain that "I'm not a racist, but…." or "I have black friends" or "I don't belong to the Klan" are denial tactics used to avoid confronting personal bias.

The journey to anti-racist learning and teaching is not an easy road to travel. In order to begin to heal wounds of racism, whiteness and white privilege need to respond to racism in ways that acknowledges that everyday racism is an issue that is very real and lived among people of colour.

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KIT – RESOURCES

This section brings together an assortment of tools and resources that can assist agencies and organizations in their development, creation, and improvement of policies and procedures relating to violence against women as well as in any staff development efforts.

Frequently Asked Questions on Issues of Gender

The following are frequently asked questions on issues of gender:[42]

What is meant by Gender?

The term *gender* refers to the economic, social, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. In most societies being a man or a woman means not only having different biological characteristics, but facing different expectations about the appearance, qualities, behaviour and work appropriate to being male or female. Relations between men and women – whether in the family, the workplace, or the public sphere – also reflect understandings of the talents, characteristics, and behaviour appropriate to women and men. Gender thus differs from sex in that it is social and cultural in nature rather than biological. *Gender* attributes and characteristics vary among societies and change over time.

Why is gender a development issue?

From a development perspective, gender is important not only because of differences between women and men in what they do, but also because of inequality between women and men. Women's personal autonomy is more limited than men's; women have less access to economic resources; and women are systematically under-represented in decision making processes that shape their societies and their own lives. There are differences among women (and among men) in interests and needs, as factors other than gender influence social identity. Nevertheless, there are clear patterns of lesser access by women to resources, opportunities, and decision-making. This pattern of inequality is a constraint on development because it limits the ability of women to develop and exercise their full capabilities, for their own benefit and that of society as a whole.

What is meant by gender equality?

Gender equality, or *equality between women and men*, consists of equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources, and rewards. As what is valued differs among societies, a crucial aspect of equality is the *empowerment of women* to influence what is valued and to share decision-making about societal priorities and development directions. Equality will not mean that men and women become the same but that their opportunities and life chances will not depend on their sex.

Why do gender strategies focus on women?

Gender equality policies and strategies have been developed precisely because gender equality does not exist. Since it is *women* who are generally excluded or disadvantaged in relation to social and economic resources and decision making, efforts to identify and redress imbalances have focused on women's situation and women's views. But it is increasingly recognized that strategies must focus on men

[42] Adapted from the *Handbook for Mainstreaming A Gender Perspective in the Health Sector*. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Health Division Document, June 1997.

as well as women, and on the relations between men and women, in order to achieve real change.

What is the role of men in achieving gender equality?

The achievement of equality implies changes for both men and women. More equal relationships will need to be based on a redefinition of rights and responsibilities of women and men in all spheres, including in the family, the workplace, and society at large. One of the challenges in moving forward will be to motivate more men to participate as partners in the process of defining the visions and strategies for a more gender equal society.

Don't men have gender too?

Gender is often overlooked as an aspect of men's social identity. This stems from a tendency to consider male characteristics and attributes as the norm, with those of women being a variation on the norm. But the lives and activities of men as well as women are strongly influenced by gender. Cultural norms and practices about "masculinity" and expectations of men as leaders, husbands, sons, and lovers – in other words, gender – are important in shaping the demands on men and their behaviour. In many societies, they mean that men are expected to bear arms and fight in defense of the nation or community. They shape the expectation that men will concentrate on the material needs of their families, rather than the nurturing and care relationship assigned to women. There are thus disadvantages and costs to men in patterns of gender difference.

Mainstreaming as a Strategy for Gender Equality

The strategy adopted by the world community at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) is *mainstreaming. The Platform for Action* emphasized two aspects of a mainstreaming strategy:

1. Equitable distribution of the resources, opportunities, and benefits of the mainstream development process. This requires the integration of equality concerns into the analysis and formulation of policies, programs, and projects, with the objective of ensuring that these have a positive impact on women and reduce the gender disparities.

2. The inclusion of the interests, needs, experiences, and visions of women in the definition of development approaches, policies, and programs and in determining the overall development agenda. This requires strategies to enable women to formulate and express their views and participate in decision making across all development issues.

Highlights of a Gender-Based and Gender-Neutral Analysis[43]

Gender-based analysis (GBA) is a method of evaluation and interpretation which takes into account social and economic differences between women and men, whether applied to policy and program development, or general life activities such as work/family roles. Fundamental principles of GBA should include the recognition that gender equality and equity can be achieved only by recognizing the different impact of norms or measures on women and men according to their diverse life situations; that gender-based analysis is an integral part of the substantive analytical process and must be applied at each stage of this process; that it focuses not only on results but also on concepts, arguments, and language used in the work process; and that gender-based analysis must lead to remedies to inequality and inequity.

Likewise, gender-neutral analysis assumes that all people are affected by policies and programs in the same way, or that there is a neutral impact on women and men as a result of a policy or program. Gender-neutral analysis does **not** result in equitable outcomes for women. It is based upon the assumption that existing structures are inclusive of women and other marginalized groups, and does not take into account the reasons why inequality exists within the status quo.

After reviewing a number of key policies affecting women's lives in an report called *Mapping Policies and Actions on Violence Against Women* (1997), the FREDA Centre in British Columbia noted the following:

- Those policies which embrace a gendered perspective and which are grounded in consultation with community groups, tend to incorporate a more informed perspective about violence against women and thus are more 'successful' in empowering women.

- However, those policies that **negate** women's critical roles as nurturers and their unequal position in society, tend not to assist women leaving violent partners. Those latter policies also tend to use gender-neutral language.

- Even when the intent of policy makers and program designers are progressive and well-informed, forces larger than themselves compromise the integrity of their outcomes. These include elite decisions regarding the allocation of resources, the complex interplay of societal factors and the impact of other policies.

- The outcomes of policies and programs are impacted further by the ideological framework in our larger society which continues to deny, dismiss, trivialize, and/or negate women's unequal status in society, resulting in their vulnerability to male violence. An overall denial that we live in a patriarchy that makes women

[43]For a comprehensive understanding of GBA tools, refer to *Gender Equality and Plan Making: The Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit,* online@rtoi.org.uk/www.rtpi.org.uk and *Exploring Concepts of Gender and Health,* Health Canada, available on http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/women/exploringconcepts.html

and children particularly vulnerable as a group.

- The efficacy of policies is curtailed by the latitude of interpretation exercised by those having discretionary power within various systems.

- This is compounded further by the shifting constellations of decision-makers exercising power over which interpretation and criteria for eligibility prevail with respect to each policy.

- The demand for "proof" of violence effectively narrows the definition of violence acknowledged by policyholders and those charged with implementation. The focus is then on physical violence, which can be proved with documentation of physical injuries, while the pattern of emotional violence, domination, and coercion goes unrecognized.

- The pressure on those in the anti-violence movement to advocate on behalf of woman abuse survivors to ensure policies are implemented in their best interests is critical. That we do so, with fewer and fewer resources, undermines our collective energy to make structural change; it wears us down.

- Few policies take into account the differences between women, the marginalization of groups of women, and the differential impact that occurs as a result of the interlocking effects of sexism with racism, homophobia, ableism, and classism.

Questions to Consider When Developing and Analyzing Policy[44]

When developing or examining a policy/program, the following questions should be asked to analyze the appropriateness of an effective approach to serving woman abuse survivors and their families.

- Who are the planners and who is included in the policy team?
- What is the analysis of the problem?
- What research is used to provide supporting data?
- What are the values, beliefs, and principles that guide the work?
- What are the priorities and objectives of the program?
- How are statistics gathered and who do they include?
- Who is consulted and who is involved in participation?
- How is the policy implemented, monitored, and managed?
- How are planning proposals evaluated? By whom?
- Are intended and unintended outcomes identified?
- What is the policy-maker's account of the history of the policy?
- What was the policy-maker's intent in crafting this policy?
- What issue(s) does the policy address?
- Was the policy developed specifically to respond to women survivors of violence in intimate relationships?
- Who is the policy intended to benefit?
- What goals and outcomes does the policy maker want to achieve with this policy?
- How do the policy-makers justify the need for such a policy?
- How will women be informed of the policy?
- Does the policy indicate whether a consultation process was undertaken to develop the policy? If so, whom did it include?
- What kind of authority does the policy have with respect to implementation?

Questions to consider when developing and analyzing policy using a gender-lens analysis:

- What does the policy NOT address with respect to its intents and goals?

[44] These questions have been adapted from the research project conducted by the FREDA Centre for Research on Violence against Women and Children called *Mapping Policies and Actions on Violence against Women* and is available at http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda (Canadian base).

- What are the "embedded" consequences in the policy for women in or leaving abusive relationships? What additional risks does the policy raise or cause?

- Have any adverse effects on women as a result of this particular policy already been documented?

- Is the policy written in plain English? Is it translated into other languages?

- Does the policy address the needs of women for whom English is not a first language?

- Are there specific provisions within the policy to take into account the differing needs of women who are immigrants or refugees? Women from Aboriginal communities? Women with disabilities? Deaf women? Racialized women? Older women? Lesbians?

- What kinds of supports are in place to ensure access to the policy and to guide women through the process?

- Would it be easily attainable by those it is supposed to benefit?

- Are there monitoring and accountability processes in place to ensure that the policy is implemented properly?

- Are there any identifiable barriers to the implementation of this policy?

- Does the policy allow any agency/autonomy for women (for example, choice as to whether or not to engage with the policy, any choice as to what will be the outcome or the ability to mediate the outcome)?

- Does the policy, re-victimize/re-traumatize women?

Questions to consider when critically analysing the ideological underpinnings and bias revealed by any policy:

- Does the policy recognize power differences between women and men?

- Does the policy recognize the impact of systemic gender discrimination?

- Does the policy recognize the impact of other forms of systemic discrimination/oppression (for example, racism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, and ageism?

- Does the policy avoid stereotypes, generalizations, and labeling of women from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and circumstances?

- Does the policy specifically recognize the prevalence of violence against women and the disproportionate abuse of women by men?

- Does the policy recognize that abusive men often use the justice system, in particular custody and access, as a way of continuing to abuse their ex-wives?

- Does the policy recognize the economic disparity between men and women, especially in the case of 'stay-at-home' mothers, both in general, and more especially, regarding the justice system?

- Does the policy recognize that the goals and perspectives of the VAW sector and the child welfare sector are often at odds?

An Example of Gender-Based Guiding Principles on Woman Abuse[45]

The guiding principles that will shape the development of a seamless system include the following:

Voice

Responses to woman abuse are provided in ways that facilitate a woman's full participation in the process, including access to information, honouring her voice in decision making, and providing clear disclosure in cases where her choices are limited.

Respecting Diversity

Responses to woman abuse are provided fairly and sensitively to people across Durham Region, respecting diversity needs. Woman abuse services are delivered within an anti-racist/anti-oppression framework. Respecting diversity includes consideration of culture, ability, religion, sexual orientation, class, and gender while still ensuring that safety and abuser accountability are maintained.

Decision Making

Responses to woman abuse recognize that the safety and needs of women and their children are central to the decision-making process.

Empowerment

Responses to woman abuse support, empower, educate, and assist women to protect themselves and their children. Women and children are supported in re-assuming power and control over their lives.

Avoid Re-victimization

Responses to woman abuse do not re-victimize the woman and/or her children. A seamless response works to reduce the re-victimization that can be perpetrated individually by the abuser and/or systemically by service organizations or the community.

Responsibility

Responses to woman abuse are the responsibility of all members of the community and require collective commitment and action.

Abuser Accountability

Responses to woman abuse hold abusers solely responsible for their behaviour.

Coordination

Community partners work together to develop effective responses to woman abuse that incorporate a shared philosophy and coordinated strategies, in order to enhance safety and accessibility of support for victims, and ensure accountability and appropriate responses.

Build on Strengths

Responses to woman abuse build on the strengths of the current system in creating timely, collaborative, creative, and flexible approaches to service delivery.

Training and Education

An effective seamless response integrates ongoing specialized training and education for service providers and the general community, to ensure an informed response to women, children, and abusers.

[45] These guiding principles were adopted by the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (Durham Region) at their Annual General Meeting held in June 2001.

Evaluation

Services and responses are regularly evaluated to ensure that they are operationalizing best practice principles and obtaining direct feedback from woman abuse survivors about the effectiveness of those responses.

An Example of Gender-Neutral Guiding Principles on Domestic Violence[46]

Respecting Diversity

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse are provided fairly, sensitively, and without bias to people across Durham Region, respecting the diversity of needs and circumstances.

Decision Making

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse recognize that parents and their children are central to the decision-making processes concerning the support/services they require.

Conflict Resolution

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse recognize that, wherever possible, joint problem resolution through negotiation and mediation provide the most sustainable solutions.

Accountability

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse recognize the joint accountability that men and women share in designing the relationship arrangements and behaviours that honour their lives. Programs and supports are developed and widely available to help women and men understand and address these behavioural issues with a focus on prevention and early resolution.

Shared Responsibility

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse are the responsibility of all members of the community and require collective commitment and action.

Co-ordination

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse are coordinated to enhance accessibility and benefit for parents and their children.

Builds on Strengths/Addresses Weaknesses

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse build on the strengths of the current system in identifying creative, collaborative, and flexible approaches to service delivery, and actions are taken to address weaknesses within the current delivery system.

Training and Education

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse ensure ongoing specialized training and community education to promote effective and equitable responses for parents and their children.

Research

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse ensure commitment to ongoing research and investigation into root causes within family dynamics, and the development of early intervention initiatives focusing on prevention versus response.

Shared Parenting

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse support, wherever possible, a shared parenting arrangement for the children during interim custody and access transition timeframes.

Respecting Law

Responses to domestic violence and partner abuse respect existing laws, Charters and Declarations of Human Rights.

[46]The comparison of these two sets of guiding principles on pp.84-86 is a useful teaching tool in articulating the differences between a gender-based analysis and a gender-neutral analysis of woman abuse.

Best Practice Principles for VAW Policy Development[47]

As a first step in the implementation of promising practices, the Board of Directors in consultation with agency staff (frontline workers and management) should develop a Statement of Philosophical Principles which provides the direction for the organization's response, identification, assessment, and support to woman abuse.

Principles:

1. Every woman and her child(ren) have a right to live free from abuse.
2. Any overt and/or subtle forms of discrimination based upon race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, class, language, and/or religion must be challenged by all services and institutions within the community response system.
3. Actively involve clients to assess their own legal needs and to have control to make decisions about their future. Services must be provided in ways that facilitate a woman's ability to exercise informed choices and, to the fullest extent possible, enable her to be a full participant in the process.
4. Woman abuse is against the law. Responses and interventions should support an appropriate criminal justice intervention. Judicial punishment is only one component of the long-term solution for ending woman abuse. Legal sanction against woman abuse should therefore be enforced consistently and vigorously.
5. To create a life free from violence for herself and her child(ren), every woman has the right to services and resources which provide safety, adequate material and financial resources, and emotional support.
6. Communities must be supported and equipped with current information to help them develop culturally appropriate and accountable policies of responding to woman abuse. A women and her child(ren) has the right to services that respect her religion, culture, language, abilities, and sexual orientation.
7. The prevention of the cycle of violence requires a coordinated response. This response should include an integrated and consistent approach to cases of woman abuse. Education, research, and training are key components of this response.
8. Issues of equality and diversity need to be specifically included in policies, together with relevant equality training. It is vital that service users are consulted in a meaningful way in the drawing up, implementing, and reviewing of the policy.

Policies remain empty rhetoric unless appropriate training and supervision are provided to integrate the policy into agency practice at all levels of the organization, including staff and Board of Directors. Policies and protocols will support these philosophical principles.

[47] Adapted from Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, *Best Practices Guidelines* (March 1998)

Example of an Integrated Analysis of Statistical Information from the Assaulted Women's Helpline [48]

For the Year of 2002-03

Total Calls 43,250.

AWHL statistics are a reflection of the issues that have been raised by women who call our crisis line.

Children

45% of all the callers to the Helpline had children.

Additional Barriers to Getting Help

- 36% of all callers identified poverty or homelessness as an additional barrier.
- 28% of all callers identified cultural or linguistic issues as an additional barrier.
- 14% of all callers identified disability as an additional barrier.
- 8% of all callers identified racism as an additional barrier.
- 7% of all callers identified sexism as an additional barrier.
- 7% of all callers identified heterosexism or homophobia as an additional barrier.

Other problems and issues identified

- 32% of all callers identified economic issues as another problem they were dealing with.
- 30% of all callers identified isolation as something they were facing.
- 18% of all callers identified housing issues as another problem they were dealing with.
- 11% of all callers identified custody and access issues as another problem they were dealing with.
- 9% of all callers identified inadequate affordable counseling as another problem they were dealing with.

Type of Abuse experienced by our callers

- 35% of all callers identified experiencing emotional or psychological abuse.
- 26% of all callers identified experiencing physical abuse.
- 12% of all callers identified experiencing threats from an abuser.
- 9% of all callers identified experiencing sexual abuse.
- 8% of all callers identified experiencing economic abuse.

[48] Adapted from The Assaulted Women`s Helpline newsletter. Autumn.2003 at www.awhl.org.

- 5% of all callers identified experiencing some form of harassing behaviour.
- 5% of all callers identified experiencing childhood sexual abuse or incest.

Other forms of abuse identified by callers include, but are not limited to the following:

- Elder abuse
- Child abuse
- Immigration related
- Property damage
- Ritualized abuse
- Stalking

Sample: Woman-Defined Policy Advocacy[49]

Woman-defined policy advocacy should acknowledge that each battered woman is unique.

- Preconceived uniform strategies or service-defined advocacy will not successfully respond to the uniqueness of battered women.

Woman-defined policy advocacy should acknowledge and seek to address the range of batterer-generated risks that battered women face.

- A wide variety of options and resources should be available to battered women, providing strategies and responses that seek to address the risk of physical violence and all other batterer-generated risks.
- Each option should be as effective as possible.
- The limitations of a particular response should be acknowledged as part of the public policy dialogue, specifically to battered women.
- Responses to the range of batterer-generated risks should be multidisciplinary and collaborative.

Woman-defined policy advocacy should acknowledge and seek to address the range of life-generated risks that battered women face.

- Responses to battered women must acknowledge the reality of life-generated risks and incorporate strategies to address them in systemic responses to family violence.
- Responses to family violence should seek to minimize batterers' opportunities to manipulate life-generated risks to further their control of their partners.

Woman-defined policy advocacy should include strategies for battered women who stay in or return to their relationships, as well as battered women who have left or are planning to leave.

- Woman-defined policy advocacy and analysis should consider and incorporate the range of battered women's safety plans, including plans for staying.
- Responses to battered women should acknowledge and anticipate that women's analyses and plans will change and allow for that change.

Woman-defined policy advocacy should seek to ensure that battered women have access to individual woman-defined advocacy.

- The opportunity for such advocacy must exist.
- The potential for life-threatening violence must be identified, responded to, and balanced with the reality that not all battered women face this risk.
- The protection of battered mothers and children must be included as an integrated aspect of responding to battered women. The differing roles of battered women's advocates and other professionals responding to family violence should be clearly established and communicated.

[49] From Jill Davies. *Safety Planning with Battered Women*. 1998, p. 149.

An Example of One Agency`s Response to Woman Abuse[50]

Commitment

1. To maintain an effective and efficient response to the need for Woman Abuse individual, family and group counseling services.
2. To provide services from a feminist and culturally sensitive perspective and to strive to expand the number of languages in which we provide services.
3. To provide these services to any woman requesting them who lives or works in the Region of Peel or in Dufferin County, regardless of age, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability, values, or beliefs.
4. To charge a fee based on client's ability to pay.
5. To maximize the health and well-being of our clients by maintaining a work environment and social climate that enhances the well-being and optimal functioning of staff.
6. To perform our work in a manner that reflects the social justice values and traditions consistent with the Catholic faith.

We Will Provide the Following Services:

Quick Access Program

This program is for clients who have been exposed to a traumatic incident (i.e., victim of a crime, woman abuse, survivor of childhood trauma, grief, and loss) and who are suffering discomfort as a result of the trauma. The Quick Access Program provides brief counseling (1-6 sessions), crisis intervention, assessment, advocacy and/or referral. High risk or recent attempted suicide will be referred to other resources. The Quick Access Program is offered in Mississauga and Brampton. First appointments are generally available within one to two weeks.

Regular Stream Woman Abuse Counselling Program

Once clients have completed the Quick Access Program, they can decide with their therapist, whether the regular stream program will fit their needs. If they are interested in continuing the work they began or if they are interested in addressing new issues and continuing the process of realizing their personal goals, this longer-term counseling program is an important option. This option allows more time and energy to be spent in the therapeutic partnership. Clients are offered up to nineteen sessions in this program. Available in Brampton and Mississauga, the waiting period for this service may be 2 to 3 months.

[50] *Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse Protocol* pages 44-46 Also refer to pages 51-56 for Family Service Agencies Recommended Guidelines on Policy and Practice at http://www.netrover.com/~pcawa/July_23_Woman_Abuse_Protocol.pdf

Women Supporting Women Group

A closed first stage 10-12 week group dedicated to providing information and support to women who have experienced some form of abuse by their intimate partners. This group is psych-educational in format and deals with issues of abuse, power and control. Women are self-referred to our group waiting list. Assessment interviews are conducted for all women interested in this program. Guidelines used to assess readiness for this program include the following:

- An ability to commit to attendance during the group.
- Ability to make own childcare and transportation arrangements.

Becoming Visible Group

This is a closed second-stage sixteen-week group for women who have been or are currently in an abusive partner relationship. Abuse is broadly defined and includes financial, physical, sexual, emotional and/or verbal abuse. The goal is to assist women in supporting each other in exploring the effects of abuse on their lives, taking the necessary steps to protect themselves from further abuse, and moving on to freedom from abuse. Women are self-referred to our group waiting list. Assessment interviews are conducted for all women interested in this program. Guidelines used to assess readiness for this program include the following:

- An ability to commit to attendance during group.
- Ability to make own childcare and transportation arrangements.
- Some understanding of woman abuse issues.
- Ability to act self-protectively when physically abused or threatened.

The program runs twice annually beginning in September and March.

Women's Advocacy Program

This program contributes to the empowerment and safety of partners during the men's participation in the Man-to-Man program. Primarily through telephone outreach, the program provides partners of abusive men with support, options, and information about protective action as well as information to help assess and cope with their situation. We are also able to link Man-to-Man program participants' with other agency programs and culturally specific women's abuse groups.

Accountability

CFSPD has a complaint procedure in place that is accessible to anyone who requests a copy. In addition, concerns may be presented to the PCAWA or to Family Service Ontario, our accrediting body. Ethical concerns regarding individual workers may also be made to the professional organization to which the worker belongs (e.g., Ontario College of Social Workers for Social Service Workers or the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy).

Intake and Referral Procedures

In order to obtain services from Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin, prospective clients must contact the Intake Department for an intake interview. Generally these interviews are conducted via a telephone call, but they might also be conducted if the client "drops in" to ask for service.

Woman abuse clients will normally be referred to our Quick Access Program, or one of the Group programs unless she requests specifically to have her name placed on the waiting list for longer-term (Regular Stream) counseling. Normally, an appointment in our Quick Access Program may be arranged within two weeks, however, if the client is in a crisis, as defined by the Intake Worker, then they will be offered the first available Quick Access appointment. If it appears that our agency cannot respond quickly enough or with enough resources, then the client will be given the necessary information to refer themselves to the appropriate resource: (e.g., Police, Hospital, Shelter). The client will also be asked to give us permission to call the resource ourselves and the Intake Worker will call to prepare the resource for the client's call.

Hours of Operation

Brampton:

8:30 am to 9:00 pm Mondays to Thursdays

8:30 am to 5:00 pm Fridays

Mississauga:

8:30 am to 9:00 pm Mondays to Thursdays

8:30 am to 5:00 pm Fridays

Orangeville:

5:00 pm to 9:00 pm Mondays

9:30 am to 4:30 pm Tuesdays

5:00 pm to 9:00 pm Wednesdays

Bolton:

9:00 am to 12:00 pm Tuesdays

Strategies/Solutions Workers Can Use to Deal With the Backlash

- Involve more men with pro-feminist analysis.
- Learn to de-escalate potential arguments before they start.
- Anticipate inflammatory questions. For example, What about lesbians who abuse? What about mothers who abuse their kids?
- Learn how to do damage control.
- Get a language update from funding allies prior to writing funding proposals.
- Name and define our language.
- Place our experience in historical context.
- Expect that all our advancements/will inevitably be followed by backlash.
- Learn how to do "Critical analysis."
- Locate the real agenda.
- Develop media literacy skills – who's in the picture, who isn't/who gets to speak/who doesn't.[51]
- Work to develop allies – create solidarity with other oppressed groups – people of colour, disabled persons, poverty coalitions, gay/lesbian advocates.
- Use the Social Justice Framework to assess if someone is part of the problem or part of the solution.
- Be familiar with up-to-date resources locally, provincially, and nationally (that is, have referral lists, relevant handouts, etc.)
- Develop a better knowledge of anti-feminist groups in order to demystify them and be able to lodge specific complaints when acts of intimidation or violence are committed.
- Clarify the caucus rules of procedure in advance of public hearings, open forums, etc.
- Develop a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)'s package and keep it current.

Keep it Simple; Build "Soundbytes" such as:

- Equality rights are human rights.
- Gender neutral analysis hides oppression.
- Context is Everything.
- Child poverty concerns maternal poverty.
- Violence is about power, inequality, and dominance.
- Oppression limits life chances and autonomy.
- Our task is to make oppression visible in all its forms.

[51] Use Kirk Makin`s article in the Globe and Mail, *The Scales of Injustice* (January 11, 2002), as a staff exercise in developing critical analysis skills.

- Small truth, big lie.
- The child-centered approach is a gender-neutral approach.
- A gender-neutral approach ignores gender reality.
- The reality is that women still do most of the parenting.
- Only when equality analysis is at the heart of change can there be fairness for women and children.
- Democracy without Women's Human Rights…is **not** democracy.
- Woman Abuse is predictable and preventable.
- Woman Abuse is a crime but it is more than a crime.

"We need to become educators who will carry out **radical transformations**"

Paulo Freire

Evaluative Questionnaire[52]

Purpose:

Gender-neutrality hides oppression and encourages traits that are counter-productive in the stride to better the lives of people. The intent of a gender-based approach is to have a different perspective from a gender-neutral approach in order to assess how your agency responds to violence against women.

This evaluative questionnaire was developed as an additional resource to assist service providers with their organization's assessment and treatment practices for women who have been or are in abusive situations.

Participants:

The information provided in the evaluation is useful to:

- Frontline workers at shelters and/or other agencies serving women in domestic violence or woman abuse situations
- Woman abuse programs
- Management
- Educators and Trainers

Scale:

1. Our agency has not considered it
2. Our agency is in the process of implementing it.
3. Our agency has implemented it
4. Our agency has completed it
5. Our agency doesn't see the need for it

A) Philosophical Principles:

i) Does your agency/organization have philosophical principles which guide your work relating to woman abuse?

1 2 3 4 5

ii) At what level(s) have these philosophical principles been discussed?

_____
_____
_____
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_____
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_____
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_____
_____
_____

iii) Have these philosophical principles been approved at the Board Level?

YES NO

iv) If YES, is your organization fully committed to them?

1 2 3 4 5

v) If NO, explain.

_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

[52] Adapted from Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, *Best Practice Guidelines,* March 1998

B) Gender –Based Analysis Questions:

Based on your above answers, respond to the following in terms of a gender-based analysis.

i) What would be needed in your agency in order to utilize a gender-based approach to service delivery?

ii) What are some of the barriers to using/implementing this kit in your organization in terms of a gender-based analysis approach specific to woman abuse?

C) Agency Evaluation:

i) Does your agency do regular program evaluation?

1 2 3 4 5

ii) Does your agency's program evaluation include a gender-based analysis approach?

1 2 3 4 5

D) Summary Questions:

i) How is your agency currently approaching family violence? Would this kit impact your current service delivery and philosophy and policies, if so how?

ii) Could your agency use some/all of the information presented in this kit? If yes then how, if no then why not?

iii) What are some of the more useful aspects of this kit that would be more useful/easily implemented within you agency/organization?

iv) Based on the differential positions at your agency/organization (Board of Directors, regional counsellors, staffing, frontline workers, management), would you use this to kit to help build consensus and shared understanding of woman abuse at all levels and programs of your organization? If YES, explain how and why this would be done. If NO, explain.

E) Additional Comments:

Please return this questionnaire to the:

Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (Durham Region)
P.O. Box 30586
Oshawa, ON
LIJ 8L8
vpcc@hotmail.com
www.durhamresponsetowomanabuse.com

KEY ARTICLES FOR AN INTEGRATED ANALYSIS OF VAW WORK

Working in the Best Interest of Children Exposed to Woman Abuse: Some Thoughts on Furthering Child Welfare and VAW Collaboration.[53]

Keeping the best interests of children in mind while also maintaining a VAW perspective is a minefield of competing tensions. The women involved in the VAW movement need to explore the many points of view that, taken together, create the "Big Picture", an essential starting point for such complex dialogue. Workers in the field need to attend to the history of legal and social changes in response to the issue of woman abuse when looking at the ramifications of child welfare reforms that bring the issue of children exposed to woman abuse into legal intervention territory.

Those who have worked with these issues for decades know that the work of ending violence against women is really in its infancy. A colleague and ally in the work, Ellen Pence suggests that we are in the first quarter of a hundred year cycle of changing the social construction of relationships between men and women. We all have a vision of how things could be in the post-patriarchal world, but in our day-to-day work with people we painfully face the reality that we all live in a patriarchal system where violence and power are glorified.

Riane Eisler (1990) describes the need for a dramatic shift in consciousness from the values of a dominator model to the values of a partnership model where equity, cooperation and mutual respect are the cornerstone of all relationships. The VAW movement needs to ensure that these ideas are applied to promote the best interests of children exposed to male violence in their families.

In Ontario, women began by exploring some of the history of the development of legal and social changes in this province. In 1982, following much VAW sector lobbying, the Government of Ontario responded with a report adopted by all three political parties that endorsed three key concepts: wife assault is a crime, abusers are a hundred (100%) percent accountable for their behaviour, and the safety of women and children is a priority. These beliefs informed all government-funded programs across the province. It was the VAW movement which orchestrated that development.

Twenty years later, the ramifications of those early choices can now be seen. The focus on the criminal aspects of woman abuse has led the government to over-emphasize criminal justice system responses and ignore the reality that woman abuse is much more than a crime. This realization was most striking throughout the four coroners' inquest into the tragic murder/suicide of Gillian Hadley by her estranged husband, which culminated in fifty-eight (58) recommendations in February of 2002.

Unlike the recommendations made by the jury in the earlier May-Isles inquest into another murder/suicide committed by an abusive male partner against his former spouse, the Hadley jury recognized the importance of locating the woman abuse issue in an equality rights framework. It became clear that until all women, in all their diversity, have true access to affordable and accessible housing, adequate income support, accessible daycare and equal pay

[53] Article by: Susan Harris and Deborah Sinclair, EWA Newsletter, Volume 12, Issues 1 and 2, Winter 2002/2003.

for work of equal value (then) all women will be vulnerable to male violence.

While we support the efforts of the criminal justice system to hold men accountable for their abusive behaviour, in the words of a colleague, Staff Inspector Brian Fazackerley, "the law is a blunt instrument". When the law is applied, individuals get hurt because their particular needs are not addressed adequately. Many frontline workers have witnessed a woman's distress over a "no contact" order when her real desire was to have the violence stop and maintain her family. Workers have felt helplessness in the face of the anguish of a woman of colour who is terrified her partner may face racist treatment in the justice system if she involves it. Tension needs to be alleviated between the needs of individual families and the need for community accountability.

A striking parallel is now occurring with the child welfare system. In March 2000, reforms to the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) made exposure to woman abuse a reportable offence. These changes resulted from the findings of the Ontario Child Mortality Task Force and simultaneous urgings from child advocates within the VAW sector. For years VAW activists have noted the serious effects of exposure to violence on children. The early research by Dr. Peter Jaffe, done in collaboration with shelter workers, validated their concerns that the children they were seeing in shelters were exhibiting signs of distress as a direct result of their exposure to violence.

Some of these children are at greater risk for harm and could benefit from child welfare assessment and intervention, but this is not the case in all circumstances. It seems, however, that once again the law is a blunt instrument. Nico Trocme from the University of Toronto, in his recent research on child welfare initiatives, found that between 1993 and 1998 there was an eight hundred and seventy percent (**870%) increase** in emotional maltreatment investigations, largely involving exposure to woman abuse. In Ontario, child welfare agencies are overwhelmed with this deluge of referrals while VAW workers are often not satisfied with their response.

Historically the response of the child welfare system to woman abuse cases has been highly criticized by the VAW community. The criticisms have ranged from ignoring the problem altogether to colluding with the abuser, blaming the mother by pathologizing her trauma, and/or charging the mother with failure to protect the child. Recently there have been attempts through the Ministry of Community Family and Children's Services and the Ontario Association of Children Aid Societies to bridge the gap between the two sectors through joint training. An excellent curriculum was developed incorporating input from CAS and VAW workers during a province-wide needs assessment. This curriculum identified values guiding VAW and CAS collaborative work. These seven key values are:

1. Working together increases safety for women and children and decreases chances for re-victimization.
2. Child abuse and woman abuse are the result of abuse of power in family relationships. Neither women nor children can be responsible for changing the abuser's behaviour.
3. Children experience trauma in families where women are abused.

4. Ensuring the safety of children is paramount, as children are most vulnerable and have the least power in our society.
5. Increasing the safety of abused women will increase the safety and well being of children.
6. Perpetrators must be held accountable for their abusive behaviour.
7. CAS and VAW services can provide a community leadership role to influence system changes.

These values have the potential of providing a basis of unity for further dialogue. However, workers from each sector need to have a vehicle to come together in order to build trust so they can enter the minefield of competing tensions. Some of these tensions include:

1. Holding the male abusive partner accountable for his violence while also engaging him in a process to become a more responsible parent.
2. Respecting the woman's readiness to take protective steps while also ensuring the safety and emotional well being of the children.
3. Acknowledging the primacy of safety of both the abused woman and her children while also acknowledging the cumulative harm which has been done, and the needs for treatment.
4. Recognizing the extent to which male abusers will continue their efforts to control their families post separation while appearing to be compliant to outside authorities (many abusers are experts in impression management).
5. Understanding that the male abuser is solely responsible for the damage created by his abuse while recognizing that the abused woman's relationship with her children may have been undermined and her ability to parent compromised.

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Ten Common Elements of Oppression[54]

Suzanne Pharr identifies ten common elements of oppression. They are: a defined norm; institutional power; economic power and the myth of scarcity; violence and the threat of violence; lack of prior claim; invisibility; stereotyping; blaming the victims for their own oppression which leads to internalized oppression; isolation; and assimilation and tokenism.

> The first is a *defined norm,* a standard of rightness, and often righteousness, wherein all others are judged in relation to it. This norm must be backed up with institutional power, economic power, and both institutional and individual violence. It is the combination of these … that makes complete power and control possible…[A]n established norm does not necessarily represent a majority in terms of numbers; it represents those who have ability to exert power and control over others.

Pharr points out that this group must have both the *political and influential power* to institutionalize its prejudices and the *economic power* to limit access to resources, mobility and employment options for others in order to be able to control them and thus enable the group to continue to exercise power to its own benefit. So also must the group have the means to use *violence or threats of violence* to maintain this societal and individual control. "For women, it is not just the rape or battering or the threat of these abuses, but also that one's life is limited by the knowledge that one quite likely will not be honored(sic) in court" or by any other institution which claims to provide help or justice. "The threat is constantly nurtured by institutions that do not respect those different from the norm."

Another means of excluding others from the power group is to deny their right to inclusion in it by raising as justification their *lack of prior claim*. In Canada, prior to the Charter, we saw this in the lack of protection for religious observances that clashed with a norm; this was justified because those religions were not represented in any numbers in 1867. But where prior claim is given as the reason for exclusion, "it is simply the circumstances of the moment that put the original people there in every case. … For simply asking for one's dues, one was vilified and abused", whether it was asking for the right to vote or the right to hold property. As Pharr points out,

> This is an effective technique, making those who struggle for their rights the ones in the wrong. Popular movements are invalidated and minimized, their participants cast as enemies of the people, and social change is obstructed by those holding power who cast themselves as defenders of tradition and order. … Those who seek their rights, … inclusion, … to control their own lives … are people who fall outside the norm. They are defined in relation to the norm and are found lacking. They are *the Other*, … seen as abnormal, deviant, inferior, marginalized, not "right," even if they … are a majority of the population. They are not

[54] This article was summarized for this project by Jane Monro, Law Professor at Ryerson University and participant in the Provincial Think Tank. This summary was based on Chapter 10 from the work of Suzanne Pharr's "Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism." Berkeley, California: Chardon Press, 1997.

> considered fully human. By those identified as the Norm, the Other is unknown, difficult to comprehend, whereas the Other always knows and understands those who hold the power; one has to in order to survive.

One way to preserve this state of the Other being "unknowable" is to keep the Other *invisible*. Pharr explains that through "television, in movies, in educational books, etc., there is reinforcement of the idea that the Norm is the majority and others do not exist or count." The Other is rarely represented in any media, and then only through "the negative aspects or failures of a particular group." This is why, as Pharr points out, popular movements deploy considerable resources to ensure that their distorted histories are rewritten.

> This distortion and lack of knowledge of the Other expresses itself in *stereotyping*, that subtle and effective way of limiting lives. It is through stereotyping that people are denied their individual characteristics and behavior and are dehumanized. The dehumanizing process is necessary to feed the oppressor's sense of being justified and to alleviate the feelings of guilt. … In stereotyping, the actions of a few dictate the classification of the entire group while the norm is rarely stereotyped.

However, all these oppressions will not be successful should the victims perceive that they are in the right and are being oppressed. One of the uses of stereotyping, therefore, is to create an environment in which the victims live

> "in an environment of negative images, stereotyping and messages, backed up by violence, victim-hating and blaming, all of which leads to low self-esteem and *self-blaming* in the victim. The oppression thus becomes internalized. The goal of this environment is to lead the victim to be complicit with his/her victimization: to think that it is deserved and should not be resisted. … When the victim of the oppressor is led to believe the negative views of the oppressor, this phenomenon is called *internalized oppression*, which is sometimes acted out as *horizontal hostility*. If one has learned self-hatred because of one's membership in a "minority" group, then … it is safer to express hostility towards other oppressed peoples than towards the oppressor."

This is why oppressed people will often identify with their oppressor. Another way to ensure that the Norm remains the standard is to *isolate* them, either "as individuals or as a 'minority' group." Coupled with stereotyping and, therefore, with internalized oppression, this is a very powerful tool, since the victims "thought that they were alone in experiencing abuse, and thought, as society dictated, that they were to blame for it." As Pharr makes clear, "some of the best work feminists have done is to change attitudes from blaming the victim to blaming the abuser, a very slow change that is still incomplete." Pharr says that the power of the anti-violence movement lies in this: by helping those who are oppressed to come together and speak out, the larger picture was made apparent, and analysis could begin on oppression as a social phenomenon, rather than as the result of the victim's inadequacies.

Finally, two very successful tools used by the patriarchy to maintain the status quo are *assimilation and tokenism*.

> There are extraordinary pressures for members of any "minority" group to assimilate, to drop their own culture and differences and become a mirror of the dominant culture. This process requires turning one's back on one's past and on one's people.
>
> … Assimilation is a first requirement of those who are chosen as tokens in the workplace of the dominant culture. … Tokenism is the method of limiting access that gives false hope to those left behind and blames them for "not making it." [It] is a form of co-optation. It takes the brightest and best of the most assimilated, rewards them with position and money (though rarely genuine leadership and power), and then uses them as a model of what is necessary to succeed.

Tokenized people get caught in a very vicious game in which, while being, at one and the same time, expected to act like the norm and yet also be representative of their minority, they are also expected by their community to help open the doors for others. Pharr points out that this puts them in an even more difficult position because "working for one's community is seen as disloyalty" by those who expect them to be team players, while, "of course, it is virtually impossible to work from the inside because the tokenized person is isolated and lacks support."

These then are the tools of oppression used by the patriarchy to maintain the status quo. Pharr is clear, and we agree, that change can only be effected by groups and that individual solutions are inimical to broad social change, such as removing the patriarchy's grip on power. Changing the patriarchy is, of course, no easy task. To be part of the feminist movement in Canada, one first has to accept and recognize that the reality of women's lives is subordinate to men economically, socially and politically. Secondly, no matter where the effort is placed, the goal needs to be changing women's inequality, not merely for one group of women but for all women, in all their diversity.

There Is No Hierarchy Of Oppressions[55]

I was born Black, and a woman. I am trying to become the strongest person I can become to live the life I have been given and to help effect change toward a livable future for this earth and for my children. As a Black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, poet, mother of two including one boy and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself part of some group in which the majority defines me as deviant, difficult, inferior or just plain "wrong".

From my membership in all of these groups I have learned that oppression and the intolerance of difference come in all shapes and sizes and colours and sexualities; and that among those of us who share the goals of liberation and a workable future for our children, there can be no hierarchies of oppression. I have learned that sexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all others and thereby its right to dominance) and heterosexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby its right to dominance) both arise from the same source as racism – a belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby its right to dominance.

"Oh", says a voice from the Black community, "but being Black is NORMAL!" Well, I and many Black people of my age can remember grimly the days when it didn't used to be.

I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of any other part of my identity. I know that my people cannot possibly profit from the oppression of any other group which seeks the right to peaceful existence. Rather, we diminish ourselves by denying to others what we have shed blood to obtain for our children. And those children need to learn that they do not have to become like each other in order to work together for a future they will all share.

The increasing attacks upon lesbians and gay men are only an introduction to the increasing attacks upon all Black people, for wherever oppression manifests itself in this country, Black people are potential victims. And it is a standard of right-wing cynicism to encourage members of oppressed groups to act against each other, and so long as we are divided because of our particular identities we cannot join together in effective political action.

Within the lesbian community, I am Black, and within the Black community, I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression.

It is not accidental that the *Family Protection Act*, which is virulently anti-woman and anti-Black, is also anti-gay. As a Black person, I know who my enemies are, and when the Ku Klux Klan goes to court in Detroit to try and force the Board of Education to remove books the Klan believes "hint at homosexuality", then I know I cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only. I cannot afford to believe that freedom from intolerance is the right of only one particular group. And I

[55] Audre Lorde. (1984). *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches.* Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press.

cannot afford to choose between the fronts upon which I must battle these forces of discrimination, wherever they appear to destroy me. And when they appear to destroy me, it will not be long before they appear to destroy you.

*Noted author Audre Lorde holds that if we truly intend to eliminate oppression, all forms must be addressed.

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack[56]

I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group

Through work to bring materials from women's studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to improve women's status, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, they are most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in Women's Studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is

[56] Peggy McIntosh is associate director of the Wellesley Collage Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988), by Peggy McIntosh; available for $4.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181 The working paper contains a longer list of privileges.

seen as work which will allow "them" to be more like "us".

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions which I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographical location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can see, my African American coworkers, friends and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place, and line of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

I usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systematically overempower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one's race or sex.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
10. Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
12. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.

19. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

21. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, out numbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.

22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.

23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.

24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.

25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in flesh color and have them more or less match my skin.

I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience which I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these prerequisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions which were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf. My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as belonging in major ways, and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be

oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made unconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit in turn upon people of color. For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. We want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systematically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantages which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an unearned entitlement. At present, since only a few have it, it is an unearned advantage for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power which I originally saw as attendant on being a human being in the U.S. consisted in unearned advantage and conferred dominance.

I have met very few men who are truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance and if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the U.S. think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and dangers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantaging associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage which rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the Combahee River Collective Statement of 1977 continues to remind us eloquently. One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms which we can see and embedded forms which as a member of the dominant group one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible

systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the systems won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitudes. But a white skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate, but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity now seems to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power, and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Though systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and I imagine for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

Overcoming Classism Within Groups[57]

Working class and poor people are another varied group. They include homeless families and deinstitutionalized mentally ill adults and persons from psychiatric facilities, elderly people, single mothers, and many children, urban families and farm families, illegal immigrants and descendants of the first Americans, unemployed people, and the working poor: factory workers, waitresses, minors, domestic servants, truckers, and many others. People with disabilities, people of Colour, women, and elderly people are seriously over-represented among the poor.

Using Classist Group Process

- Identifying the group as middle class because you are; making working class members invisible.
- Having upper and middle class leaders, spokespeople, facilitators – with the accompanying power and influence – while working class people do the group's maintenance work and leg-work: clean-up, mailings, errands.
- Expecting everyone to be comfortable with personal sharing and touching.
- Using lingo and theoretical concepts developed within middle or upper class communities without defining your language.
- Scheduling non-work related meetings or events during business hours.
- Expecting much volunteer work and time, without regard for people's different economic pressures.
- Expecting people to front money for their own projects until the group reimburses them.

Delegitimizing

- Dominating conversations.
- Using a process that makes it difficult for working class people to express their opinions.
- Not listening.
- Disregarding a working class person's experience when it differs from yours.

Applying Classist Standards

- Valuing formal education over informal.
- Valuing intellectual skills over practical life skills.
- Valuing head-work over manual labour.
- Defining people by their work instead of by how they define themselves. Asking "What do you do?" when you mean "Who are you?"

[57] Original Source Unknown

- Assuming a working class person would prefer your job or your social position.
- Negatively judging working class choices of speech, dress, and fun. For instance, assuming that "proper" English, 100% cotton, and no television show style.

Using Classist Language

- Using "poor" to mean bad or pitiful and "rich" to signify good, as in "poor workmanship", "you poor thing" or "richly deserved."

Stereotyping

- Assuming that working class people are unintelligent, ignorant, prejudiced, or child-like.
- Assuming that someone is poor because she is unmotivated or lazy.
- Distrusting and/or fearing working class people; assuming they are more likely than upper or middle class people to commit crimes or to be violent.
- Insisting that poor people constantly prove their need for assistance. Assuming they're trying to chat or get something for nothing.
- Not seeing the diversity among working class people.

Rationalizing

- Considering poor people to be undeserving.
- Considering that some people – women, poor people, people with disabilities, children, elderly people, people of Colour – deserve and/or need less to live on than you do.
- Saying "anyone who works hard enough can make it," while ignoring the very real advantages enjoyed (not earned) by people born into wealth, white skin, maleness and physical health.
- Seeing wealth as evidence of virtue – hard work, faith, brains, perseverance, God-reward – rather than as evidence of luck, rich family or friends, and/or starting capital.

Self-Protection

- Not confronting classist remarks or policies in your group.
- Not finding out how your organization treats its working class employees.
- Not supporting a working class person when she confronts classism.
- Crossing picket lines.
- Being defensive about your class background or current financial resources.
- Considering your luxuries more important than someone else's basic needs.

Engaging in Upper-Class Guilt

- Pretending to have less money than you have.
- Feeling bad or embarrassed about your wealth and/or class privilege, rather than acknowledging it to make honest choices about how to use your money.
- Proudly claiming poverty though your class background provides you with back-up resources – family invested savings, assets. Not acknowledging the difference between this and a working class person's situation.
- Equating voluntary downward mobility with working class people's lack of options.

Disempowering

- Assuming that upper or middle class people should determine working class people's needs, and run social services "for" them.
- Trying to solve things for a working class person rather than giving her/him the means – information, resources, and support – to solve things for her/himself.
- Generally keeping working class people out of decision-making roles.
- Not offering a working class person the same opportunities for learning or advancement that his middle and upper class peers have.
- Tracking people from working class backgrounds into job areas you think would be appropriate for them, regardless of their preferences.
- Trivializing a working class person's concerns.
- Negatively judging a working class person whose communication style differs from yours, who may be more direct and less "polite", more concrete and less theoretical, or who may express her feelings through tone and body language rather than articulating them.

Ignoring Class

- Never talking about money.
- Not sharing information about salaries and – in particular – salary differences.
- Not discussing cost when deciding on a group activity.
- Not asking who can and cannot afford something; making the working class people bring the issue up.
- Pretending we all have the same choices.
- Assuming it is the working class person's problem if he can't afford something. Not trying to solve the problem as a group through cost-sharing, choosing a less expensive activity, etc.

- Saying "I can't afford it" when you mean you don't choose to.
- Not believing a working class person who claims he can't afford something.

Excluding

- Talking, eating and associating only with other middle or upper class people.
- Regularly meeting or socializing in costly places.
- Making it impossible for someone without money to spend to be truly part of the group.
- Expecting people to chip in significant amounts of money for office parties or gifts. Making it impossible or embarrassing for them not to participate.
- Meeting in an environment which may be unfamiliar or intimidating to some working class people – at a University instead of a community center, a luxurious house instead of a local church, "uptown" instead of "downtown".
- Choosing a location not accessible by public transportation.
- Charging admission without offering fee wavers.
- Offering aid or a sliding scale which is difficult or humiliating to obtain.
- Offering a sliding scale which goes neither low enough nor high enough.
- Not providing free childcare.
- Not including speakers and workshops on class issues.
- Not featuring working class speakers on a variety of topics.
- Not including working class people in the planning stages of any event.
- Not paying speakers a living wage; assuming they can afford an inadequate honorarium or should donate their time.

Devaluing

- Undervaluing and underpaying working class labour-service and maintenance work, manual labour, any jobs traditionally done by immigrants, people of Colour, or women.
- Not acknowledging that your own work could not happen without the labour of working class people – typists, office cleaners, electricians, trash collectors, construction workers, train conductors.
- Acting as though working class people exist just to serve you.

Dehumanizing

- Not seeing or speaking to the service personnel around you.

- Assuming that somebody else should do your shitwork so that you have time to do creative work.
- Treating working class people as if you were entitled to their labour, not thanking them.
- Assuming that poor people do not deserve the same choices as you deserve, that they should be grateful for anything, should live on as little as humanly possible and maybe less.
- Denigrating welfare or financial assistance recipients. Suspecting them of fraud.
- Believing you have a right to judge how poor people spend their money or their time.
- Generally believing yourself superior to working class people.

Please Note

If peoples' different styles are disrupting your group's ability to work together, the conflict may be due to class differences. Working class people are often comfortable doing several things at once, coming in and out of a meeting, having children present, dealing with whatever issue seems most immediate, rather than following a pre-set agenda. Their lives may not offer the luxury of arriving everywhere on time. To upper and middle class people who would like to see a prompt, focused, and structured meeting in which people give each other quiet, undivided attention, this working class style can feel like chaos. Similarly, working class people who express themselves bluntly and honestly can seem rude or domineering to upper and middle class people used to tact.

Acknowledging differences due to class and the equal validity of each style can help group members correctly interpret what's happening. And establishing an atmosphere of mutual respect can help people find a style of being within the group that neither completely compromises their own preferences nor completely alienates other group members

Making Privilege Transparent[58]

It is painful for us to recognize that as women we may oppress other women, it is nevertheless a fact. What follows is a list of ways we oppress each other. These points could also apply to male privilege.

1. Prejudice: Having a pre-conceived idea of what it is to be a racialized and/or minority woman, a woman from a developing country, a lesbian, a woman with a disability, or a working class woman. Your ideas have not been formed by contact with the particular group of people you hold these ideas about. Perhaps you believe that Lesbians are man-haters or have emotional problems, that Native people are drunks or that working class people are all welfare bums who are too lazy to get off their asses and work their way up. (Men believing that women are emotionally unstable due to hormonal changes in our bodies). Even if you meet someone who doesn't fit in to your preconceived notion, you think she's an exception, yet you continue to think of the group in that way.
2. Assumption: Making assumptions when talking about all women, as if you are talking about all women when in fact what you are saying is only applicable to white women and/or middle class women and/or heterosexual women. Speaking to a group of women as if every woman in the group is white and/or heterosexual and/or middle class. Making statements about feminism that are only applicable to the above group of women, i.e., "You're just a mother." or "Why don't you want a career?" or "We all have to learn how to teach our lovers to respect us as women." or "The oppression we all experience first is our oppression as women". Criticizing racialized and/or minority women, women from developing countries, lesbians, women with disabilities or working class women for defining their political commitment in terms of their own community instead of feminism. Making token mention of racism, heterosexism and classism without including them in your analysis or discussion and without being prepared to take some form of action. Not connecting proposals that are thought of with women in mind, without considering their consequences, e.g., suggesting more police patrols in a particular area without considering the role of police in oppressing people of colour, working class people and gay men and lesbians. Not noticing when authors and speakers do any of the above. Other examples include individualism in its various forms, e.g., anyone can make it if they want to, Margaret Thatcher made it; Julian Band made it; lesbianism is an individual choice and lifestyle choice and has nothing to do with politics; if these welfare bums would stop spending money on booze they could get a decent set of clothes and go to work, etc., etc., etc.
3. Ignorance: Not knowing the facts about other women's lives, not knowing their histories or anything about other women's cultures. Lumping other

[58] This article is adapted from an article by the Vancouver Rape Relief Centre on racism. It has been rewritten so that it now pertains to privilege based on race, class, ability and sexuality.

women all in together, i.e., people of colour or gays, without knowing much about the differences between different groups of people or about individuals within one group.

4. Self-Criticism: Depending on working class women, racialized and/or minority women, women with disabilities, and/or lesbians to criticize you. Assuming that if you aren't criticized you must be doing all right. You avoid self-criticism: you refuse to do anything about oppressing other women unless they tell you exactly what to do and set up a programme for you. This can also take the form of insisting that you understand everything about racism/classism/ heterosexism before you will begin to relinquish your own privilege or try to use them to the advantage of less privileged women and thereby begin to stop oppressing others. This is not only a stall, it is unwillingness to struggle because understanding increases with action and involvement.
5. Avoidance: Not wanting to think about racism, heterosexism or classism because it makes you feel uncomfortable, i.e., feeling defensive, angry, guilty, helpless, tuned-out. By not thinking about it much, you can make yourself believe you are not racist/classist/homophobic and that every thing is okay. You might avoid making contact with lesbians, racialized and/or minority women or working class women for this reason; talking to them might make it obvious that you have attitudes that you have to change or else talking to them brings up your fear about what they're thinking about you, so it's easier not to talk. Besides there's the question of what to talk about. You're not comfortable talking to them about racism, homophobia, classism because it emphasizes differences, yet you can't stop thinking about it or worrying about it or feeling afraid and guilty around them, so on the one hand you are super-aware of differences but you are denying they exist or ignoring those women who are "different".
6. Not Speaking Up: Not speaking up if someone makes a racist, heterosexist, ableist, classist remark or joke, especially if there is a woman who is directly affected by the remark present. You might feel reluctant to speak up thinking she should say something or it should be her choice because she might prefer that the remark not be confronted. But the result of this is that the woman not only hears the remark but is also aware of your complicity in not addressing it. Whereas if you did confront it that would show some support.
7. Avoidance Through Manipulation: Telling a woman that she is oppressing, that she is too hostile and is in fact oppressing you with her hostility. By telling another woman that she's making a big deal out of nothing, i.e., "After all I wouldn't tell you what to do in your bedroom." or "I think you're making me the focus for a lot of anger that belongs to society in general." or "Who knows what class is anyway and why do you need to talk about it." Placing demands on women to be nice.
8. Personality: Insisting that the problems between you and another woman are not based on class, race, or sexuality, but rather on personality conflicts.

9. Individualism: Telling women to deal with your ideas not your personality. Ignoring the fact that many of the things that you consider personality may be based on your culture, your class and/or your sexuality. These things can show in dress, tone of voice, mannerisms, attitudes, expectations and are avoided by saying they are part of your personality. This is not to say that you aren't individuals but before we can assert our true selves we must know how much of our behaviour is rooted in our culture and class backgrounds.
10. Language: Ignoring the fact that "educated" speech patterns are made available to a small percentage of people. You may insist that other women speak your way or that really important ideas cannot be communicated in language that is not "highly developed" (mystifying). You might tell a woman to speak in a rational way, i.e., your way. Even aside from the question of who has access to this language, there is the assumption that is the better way. We also make the assumption that speech is the only way to communicate. This excludes women whose first language is ASL or non-verbal.
11. Patronizing: Treating other women like children if they don't have the educational qualifications you admire or if English is their second language. Condescending or talking down to other women or thinking they are slow or lazy. Thinking women are rude or slow if they do not do things the way they are "supposed to be done", instead of recognizing cultural and class differences that affect the way we all do things. You choose to believe that women who have different ideas than you are lacking a good education instead of realizing that different ideas could come from cultural assumptions. You can't admit to yourself that you aren't more intelligent than other women, only more privileged. This can come by your making fun of women who don't have your book knowledge, criticizing bad spelling and grammar, joking and imitating speech patterns and accents that are different from your own.
12. Use of Language: Using terms to describe people that assume whiteness as a norm, e.g., nonwhites. Using terms that connect "black" to evil and "white" to good, i.e., "black list" "white lie". Using terms in odd places, i.e., "The family is poor but hardworking", "She's a lesbian but she's really nice".
13. Disbelief: Not really believing when a woman talks about her oppression as a racialized and/or minority women, a woman with disabilities, a woman from developing countries, lesbian or working class women because it isn't similar to your own. Perhaps her experience sounds too melodramatic and horrible to be true. It seems more like a plot from a book or movie than the experiences of a real life person.
14. Discounting: When a woman confronts you or your classism, racism and/or heterosexism, you don't believe you are actually oppressing her although you agree that white/heterosexual/ middleclass people in general oppress her, you don't see that you personally are doing anything oppressive to her but rather it is the system.

How To Interrupt Oppressive Behaviour[59]

One summer at a small Western riding camp, a group of campers decided that any new boys at camp would be called "faggots" until they proved otherwise. They teased several boys, calling them "sissies" and "faggots", mostly because they wore the wrong kind of jeans and weren't macho cowboys.

During an interview with a prospective riding instructor, a camp director described his private, all-girls riding camp as, "Not one of those stuck-up Jewish camps". He warned the interviewee away from such camps.

After the first week of the camp season, two girls were sent home. They were the only two black campers in a camp of 100 white campers. The camp director said that they "weren't adjusting well" and that they wouldn't like it at that camp.

Jokes that made fun of Helen Keller's disabilities were very popular one summer at a camp run by a local social service agency.

As a group of counselors worked on solving an initiative problem on the camp's ropes course during staff training, one male counselor said to another "How are we going to get the girls over the wall? They're too weak to get themselves over."

What do all of these incidents have in common? They're all experiences I had during my years as a camper and staff member at a variety of camps. Name-calling, jokes, stereotyping and discrimination against campers or staff are examples of ways that societal attitudes about particular groups of people are acted out as individual behaviours.

Prior to celebrating diversity, we must first eliminate intolerance. No matter what form it takes or who does it, we must all take action to stop intolerance when it happens. Working toward a celebration of diversity implies working for social justice – the elimination of all forms of social oppression.

Camps reflect the social injustice that is prevalent in North American society. Even though many camps are in idyllic physical settings away from the environmental problems of the cities, the social problems come to camp with the staff and campers. Social injustice takes many forms. It can be injustice based on a person's gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or economic class.

While there are differences between forms of social injustice, there are also a number of commonalities. Some of those commonalities include a power differential between groups of people, the use of stereotyping to limit people, and the exclusion of the disempowered group.

In order to work for social justice in the world, we need to confront all forms of social injustice. What do we do when a camper tells a Helen Keller joke or a camp director excludes a camper based on his or

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Works Against Social Justice		Works Toward Social Justice				
Actively Join in Behaviour	No Response	Educate Oneself	Interrupt the Behaviour	Interrupt and Educate	Support Others' Proactive Response	Initiate Proactive Response

her race? First and foremost, it is important to confront the behaviour.

When I experience oppressive behaviour, it is helpful for me to think about having a whole range of possible responses – what I think of an Action Continuum.[60]

In any situation, one can choose a range of actions – from participating in the oppressive behaviour to working to prevent oppressive behaviour on an organizational level.

Now, let's apply the continuum to two of the incidents described at the beginning of the article.

Actions That Work Against Social Justice

Actively Join in the Oppressive Behaviour:

To actively join in oppressive behaviour means doing something that supports the oppressive behaviour rather than interrupting it. Examples:

Laugh at the Helen Keller joke and share another of your own.

You say, "I'm glad the director sent those girls home. This camp isn't for black people."

No Response:

No response means not responding to the behaviour. Examples:

Not laughing at the joke.

Not saying something in response to the black campers being sent home.

Actions That Work Toward Social Justice

Educate Yourself:

To educate yourself means to learn more about what is behind the oppressive behaviour. Examples:

Read about the accomplishments of people with disabilities in the face of discriminations.

Read about ways camps have been exclusive in the past and now welcome campers from a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Interrupt the Behaviour:

To interrupt the behaviour means expressing your disapproval of the behaviour. Possible responses:

[60]The concept of an action continuum is one that is used by the Social Issues Training Project at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

"I don't think that joke is funny."

"I don't think those campers should be sent home."

Interrupt and Educate:

To interrupt and educate means expressing your disapproval of the behaviour and explaining what is oppressive about the behaviour. Possible responses:

"I don't think jokes that make fun of someone's disabilities are funny because they assume that someone with a disability is not worthy of respect."

"I don't think it is appropriate to send the black girls home. People of colour have a long history of being unfairly excluded from all-white organizations in this country. We should not perpetuate that exclusion."

Support Others' Proactive Responses:

To support the proactive responses of others means supporting the efforts of other people to educate or take action that promotes understanding of differences. Examples:

Encourage the campers who are telling jokes about Helen Keller to go to the campfire program that includes a puppet show about kids with disabilities.

Support the camp board of directors' efforts to investigate ways to welcome campers and staff from various racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Initiate a Proactive Response:

Initiating a proactive response means taking some kind of action that promotes understanding and valuing of cultural differences in camp settings. Examples:

Plan a series of events that focus on understanding and valuing people who have a wide range of abilities.

Organize a seminar for the camp staff on working with campers from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Taking action to stop oppressive behaviour can be difficult.

It is easy to feel awkward or caught off-guard. This action continuum can be used to think about different situations one might encounter. One can then mentally rehearse possible responses to situations that might occur. It also gives an individual the opportunity to choose an action that will be best suited to the situation and to the goal of promoting social justice.

Factors in deciding which response to make, include the level of risk for yourself and others, your power in the situation and your understanding of this form of social injustice. I recommend that you think about situations you have encountered and think about the range of possible responses you could have to each situation. Then, you will be better prepared the next time someone around you makes an oppressive comment or does something that creates a barrier to celebrating diversity. This action continuum can also be used during staff training as the basis for a discussion on dealing with oppressive behaviour.

If everyone at camp makes a commitment to respond appropriately to oppressive behaviour, the groundwork will be laid for creating camps where diversity is truly celebrated.

Internalized Dominance[61]

I am a white, able-bodied woman of 39 from a middle class, Protestant Christian heritage background. I am a lesbian.

We have all learned some very fundamental lessons about ourselves and others, about who we are and what the world looks like. Furthermore, we have all absorbed, taken in and accepted these messages at some level, even if we didn't want to and even if we don't intellectually believe them.

What are these messages about? Race; class; sex; sexual orientation; religious-cultural heritage (for example, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian); age; language; physical ability; etc., etc., etc.

Around each of the above, there are people on both sides of a power imbalance in society, some on the side with more power, some on the side with less. I am going to call those on the less powerful side, "target group" or "oppressed" people, and those on the more powerful side, "non-target group" or "dominant group" people.

Clearly, there are many different target groups that inter-relate in different ways. Around the issue of race alone, there are numerous target groups: Aboriginal people, Asian people, black people, Arab people, Latinas/Latinos, and so forth.

Most people are members of some target groups and of some dominant groups, at least at some point in their lives. Of course, some people are members of more target groups than others.

This article is based on the idea that the lessons we have learned, in regard to all these divisions in society, can be "un-learned", once they have been recognized and acknowledged. That is why I talk about unlearning racism, unlearning sexism and classism and so on. Of course this kind of "individual" unlearning will not rid the world of racism or classism or any other ism. All the institutions in our society are fundamentally racist and classist, and so on; all these divisions are perpetuated both institutionally and individually. If we cannot unlearn the messages we have learned as individuals, we will not be able to change the institutions – if only because we will not be able to see them for what they really are.

Our oppressive society teaches everybody negative messages about target group people. We all hear, from childhood on, these negative messages, lies and stereotypes about target groups; and we cannot help but take them in even though we may also learn intellectually that they are not true. If we are in a target or oppressed group, we learn negative messages about *ourselves*; we learn to internalize our oppression.

What is less obvious, and is seldom talked about, is that we also all learn positive messages about dominant group people. There is nothing wrong with positive messages in themselves. But there is something wrong if they are exclusive, if they become positive stereotypes which only apply to some people and not to others. For any dominant group we are in, we learn positive messages about *ourselves*, we learn to internalize our own dominance.

The central idea that dominant group people learn about themselves is that they are part of the "norm". White people, for instance,

[61] Adapted from Angles with her special thanks to Dorrie Brannock for originating the term 'internalized dominance', for developing these ideas and for writing part of this article with her (date unknown).

have learned that in being white they are "normal". This is not a message that most white people, or most any dominant group people, are aware of having learned. It is a message that most often displays itself in the form of assumptions about what the world is like and what point of view it is seen from.

Example: Remember "flesh-coloured" band-aids, as they used to be called? I was in my early twenties before it occurred to me whose flesh the manufacturers were talking about, and who was left out of that vision of the world. Not having to question or confront this, not bumping into a contradiction of one's own reality, is part of the privilege of being white. Not *noticing* the exclusiveness of the world this "flesh-coloured" described is an example of internalized dominance.

Internalized dominance masquerades under the guise of normality. It is based on what our society teaches us about the idea of the "norm". We are taught to look at reality in a distorted way, so that what really is normal is not the same as what is seen or perceived to be "normal". That which is seen as "normal" is defined that way by those who have power in society. The dictionary definition of "norm" is (in part) "an established standard of behaviour shared by members of a social group to which each member is expected to conform." It is important to remember that somebody, or rather some groups, set and maintain those standards. If you fall into the group that is defined as "normal", you tend not to notice all the ways in which your way of being in the world is validated, assumed and reinforced. If you fall "outside" this group, you are the one who is perceived as being "different."

There are degrees and different kinds of perceived "normality". The most "normal" sort of person to be is a white, heterosexual, middle class, able-bodied male of Christian heritage and between the ages of about 25 and 45 – despite the fact that this describes a distinct minority of people. It is not *perceived* as entirely "normal", with all kinds of variations and permutations to be:

- Female
- Working class
- Gay or lesbian
- Disabled
- Jewish or any other non-Christian group
- A person of colour
- Or a member of any other target or oppressed group

Of course it *is* perfectly normal to be any of all of the above. Only the lens we are taught to look through distorts this fact. The accepted and assumed vision of the world does not include the perceptions of those outside the "norm".

Internalized dominance is generally invisible to those who have it. It is not visible to those who don't have it but have to deal with it – people in the target group (some of whom, of course, may have internalized dominance around a different issue where they are in a dominant group). People of colour, for instance, bump into white people's internalized dominance all the time. Most well-intentioned white people are not aware, have not recognized or acknowledged that their behaviour and their assumptions are part of the problem. Being part of society's perceived "norm" carries with it a lot of

power. Because many white people do not *feel* powerful, and many indeed are not powerful in other ways, they do not see the power that they do have because they are white. The invisibility of this power to those who have it is part of internalized dominance.

Example: A group was meeting to discuss issues of concern to welfare mothers; the group was composed of some professional people and some welfare mothers. A number of the professionals suggested that the group hold breakfast meetings at a restaurant. It did not occur to them to wonder how the women on welfare were going to pay for breakfast, or what they were going to do with their children. These professionals were well-intentioned people. But they were so firmly rooted in their own reality and their own point of view that they assumed it was everyone's reality, even though they actually knew that it wasn't. Their knowledge was abstract; they still operated as if their view of the world was universal.

Here is a point form outline of the messages we learn.

Target or oppressed group

- Internalized oppression
- Feelings of "different-ness"
- Experience and feelings of powerlessness
- Experience and feelings of being excluded
- Shame (about oneself)

Non-target or dominant group

- Internalized dominance
- Feeling of "normality"
- Experience and feelings of powerfulness
- Experience and feelings of being included
- Guilt (about others)

Example: I was born and grew up in this country. I love history. I learned nothing about the history of native people here when I was in school, and I know only a little bit more now than I did then. Everything we learned in school was from the colonizers point of view, nothing from the point of view of the people who were already here. This is still true of almost everything written in mainstream media and books, and on the left too, about the founding and the history of this country. "Aboriginal issues" may be mentioned; they are not the predominate point of view. Making the history of a people invisible helps make the present reality invisible too, and robs people of their power in a very real way. Furthermore, very few Canadians seem to think that we should learn Canadian history from anything other than a European colonizing point of view. That assumption is another example of internalized dominance.

Example: Look at the concept of "out-reach" as it exists in many woman's groups and alternatives and left organizations, particularly if the group is predominantly white and/or middle class. "Outreach" tends to imply not so much a reaching out for a mutual understanding and connection, should other groups and other people so desire it, but rather an attempt to "gather in" others to the "out-reaching" group, to get others involved in issues already defined by that group, with little or no sense that the

point of view of the group is open to change. "Outreach", in this sense, is undertaken by dominant groups toward target groups. (Oppressed people don't need to "outreach" toward dominant groups - the dominant point of view is always available should they want it.) This is a difficult question for many organizations who may quite sincerely want to broaden their scope and their point of view and not remain predominantly white, but have not finished examining their own (often unconscious) values, assumptions, processes and methods of operating to recognize where they may, even unintentionally, exclude other groups of people.

Attributes of dominance that are perceived to be the "norm" are often not considered to need stating, they are simply assumed. This helps keep in place the dominant group's perception of themselves as "normal" and others as "different" or "exceptions". Again, the power and the validation that this gives to people in the dominant group is seldom acknowledged or even recognized by them.

Example: In many white people's speech and writing, descriptions of people of colour include their race, while descriptions of white people do not. How often have we read things like "A black woman crossed the street", when, had the woman been white, the sentence would have read, "A woman crossed the street"? Or when the race of the woman in question is completely irrelevant and will never be mentioned again? This sort of thing reinforces the notion that people of colour are "outside" the "norm", are exceptions, do not exist unless specifically mentioned. Everyone is white unless defined otherwise; hence the point of view of people of colour is invisible. Frequently this particular kind of internalized dominance expresses itself in sentences like this: "27 police officers graduated today including three women and one Chinese." What race are the remaining 26 officers? What race are the three women? What sex is the Chinese officer? Because we have all learned what the perceived "norms" are, we all (unfortunately) know that this sentence really means "27 police officers graduated today; 24 of the new officers are white men," But I have never seen a sentence like this in the newspaper.

Internalized dominance doesn't cause problems for those who have it in their day-to-day lives. It does not make them uncomfortable, it does not affect their lives in negative ways that might force them to examine it, challenge it, begin to unlearn it. On the contrary, for dominant people, internalized dominance feels perfectly natural, comfortable and "normal". Therefore, if someone points out their dominant behaviour and calls it oppressive, the dominant person usually gets very upset: "I'm just being myself!" They may really feel that they are being picked on, that someone is doing something to them, that they are being treated unfairly. In other words, only when internalized dominance is challenged do white people, for instance, feel that there is a problem. And often they may think, at some level, that it's the *challenger* who is creating the problem, not themselves.

The assumed "norm" is not usually stated or directly acknowledged. In a situation where the usual "norm" is not operating, dominant people will usually be extremely aware of the *absence* of the "norm" in a way in which they are seldom aware of its presence.

Example: Most white people in Canadian society are accustomed to being in the numerical majority. They are seldom, if ever, in situations where there are more people of colour than white people. When white people find themselves in a situation where they are outnumbered by people of colour, or even where the numbers are roughly equal, they may become acutely aware of their whiteness in a way that seldom, if ever, happens otherwise. Suddenly, even if temporarily, they are not part of the operating "norm". It can be quite a shock. The first time I was in this situation, I was extremely aware of it, felt quite self-conscious, scared, awkward, didn't know what assumptions were operating – and of course tried to pretend that everything was "normal"! Which of course it was, in a real sense; it was a perfectly normal party. But the "norm" of whiteness wasn't operating. I was the only white person, and at some level that really threw me for a loop. (At the same time, I knew that there was nothing rationally threatening or even odd in the situation, and I knew that people of colour are surrounded by white people, here, all the time. This knowledge did not change the way I felt.) The "norm" of whiteness is so exclusively established for some white people that they will often feel outnumbered when in fact they are not – where there are more whites than people of colour, but a greater proportion of people of colour than many whites are used to, it can be enough to make them think they are in the minority when they actually are not.

The interests and points of view of people who are "outside" the "norm" are considered to be "special interests", "single issues", "narrow points of view", etc. The interests of the dominant group are considered everyone's interests: the point of view of the dominant group is considered to be a *universal* point of view. (Have you ever heard business interests described as "special interests", for instance or business-oriented politicians described as "single issue" politicians?) The charge of "special interest", "single issue", etc. means that people speaking from outside the perceived "norm", about their own experiences and concerns, are not listened to by the dominant group. It invalidates and belittles everything they have to say. It silences them. It also means that oppressed people's positions and issues tend to get defined by the dominant group instead of by themselves.

Example: Now that Svend Robinson has come out as gay, he will probably find it impossible to say anything about gay issues without being branded a "single issue" politician. Many heterosexual people will probably think he is talking about homosexuality all the time if he mentions it once a year. At the same time, heterosexual news people will all rush to him any time they want to comment about a gay issue. (According to the perceived "norm", of course, there is no such thing as a "heterosexual issue", or a "white issue", or a "men's issue".) This has the effect of labeling Svend, of silencing him, and of allowing people to discount anything that he does say. If he gets upset or angry about the oppression of gays and lesbians, he will probably also be called "too sensitive".

It is important that people who are dominant in some way – white, middle class, heterosexual, etc., look at their internalized dominance, acknowledge it and start to unlearn it. This is not easy. What happens when people try?

Where people start examining their own internalized dominance, they are challenging their own perceptions of the world. They are challenging their own point of view. Our perceptions and our point of view feel like an integral part of who we are. They affect our entire way of being in the world. Our assumptions about what the world looks like give us a basis for how we act in it. Shaking up these assumptions, trying to change them is a scary thing to do; I find it a bit like pulling the rug out from under my own feet. If I don't know how to act in it; I don't know what my place is in it; I don't know what is safe. When I'm scared, when I'm not quite sure where the ground is under my feet, I get defensive; I get angry and resentful. I have to keep reminding myself that I would rather go through this difficult process of having to unlearn, then relearn what the world looks like, than keep the limiting and inaccurate picture that I have been taught.

If people do not acknowledge the ways in which they are *oppressed*, it will be especially difficult for them to deal with their internalized dominance. This may sound paradoxical, but it does make sense. We all have feelings of powerlessness, ways that we have been (still are) oppressed; as lesbians and gays, as people of colour, as working class people, as young people, etc. If we don't start looking at the ways in which we have internalized whatever oppression we have, we will have a lot of hidden, or not-so-hidden anger and resentment about that oppression, about those feelings of powerlessness and shame. Those feelings will get in the way of attempts to look at where we are dominant. Trying to change our assumptions and behaviours won't work very well – mostly we will wind up feeling incredibly resentful.

Most dominant people do not think of their behaviour as having a direct or important effect on oppressed people's lives. Well-intentioned white people, for instance, seldom really believe that they create problems for people of colour. Many of the examples of internalized dominance I have given here may seem trivial or petty. But make no mistake about it: internalized dominance has a major impact on the lives of people of colour and of all oppressed people. It directly creates a real lack of power in the world for oppressed people. It directly translates into people not getting good jobs, not getting any jobs, not getting decent housing or nutrition. It directly translates into people being made invisible, both individually and as a group. It means that oppressed people cannot make decisions about their own lives. It undermines oppressed people and hits at every level of their being. Of course working to change internalized dominance in a personal way is not going to stop all of these things from happening. All our institutions perpetuate the racism and other isms that are fundamental to our society. Working to unlearn internalized dominance does mean that we are working to stop personally perpetuating oppression, and that we will do a much better job when we are out in the world trying to change the oppressive structures and institutions of our society.

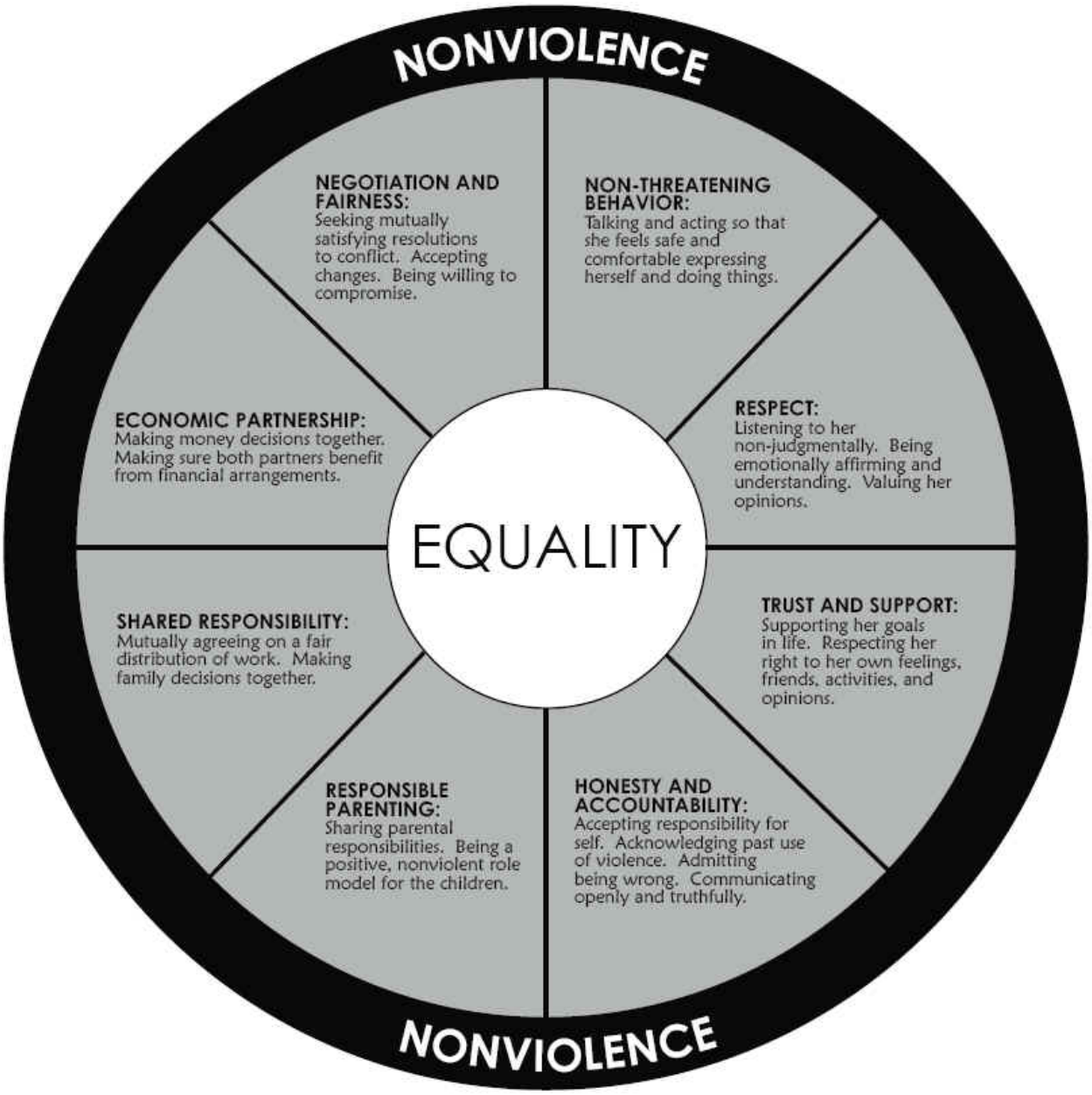
In any way in which we are in a dominant group, we have been taught to internalize our own dominance. That is not our *fault*. It does not mean that we are bad people. It does mean that our learned values, assumptions and behaviours are actively hurting other people. It does mean that it is our *responsibility* to change.

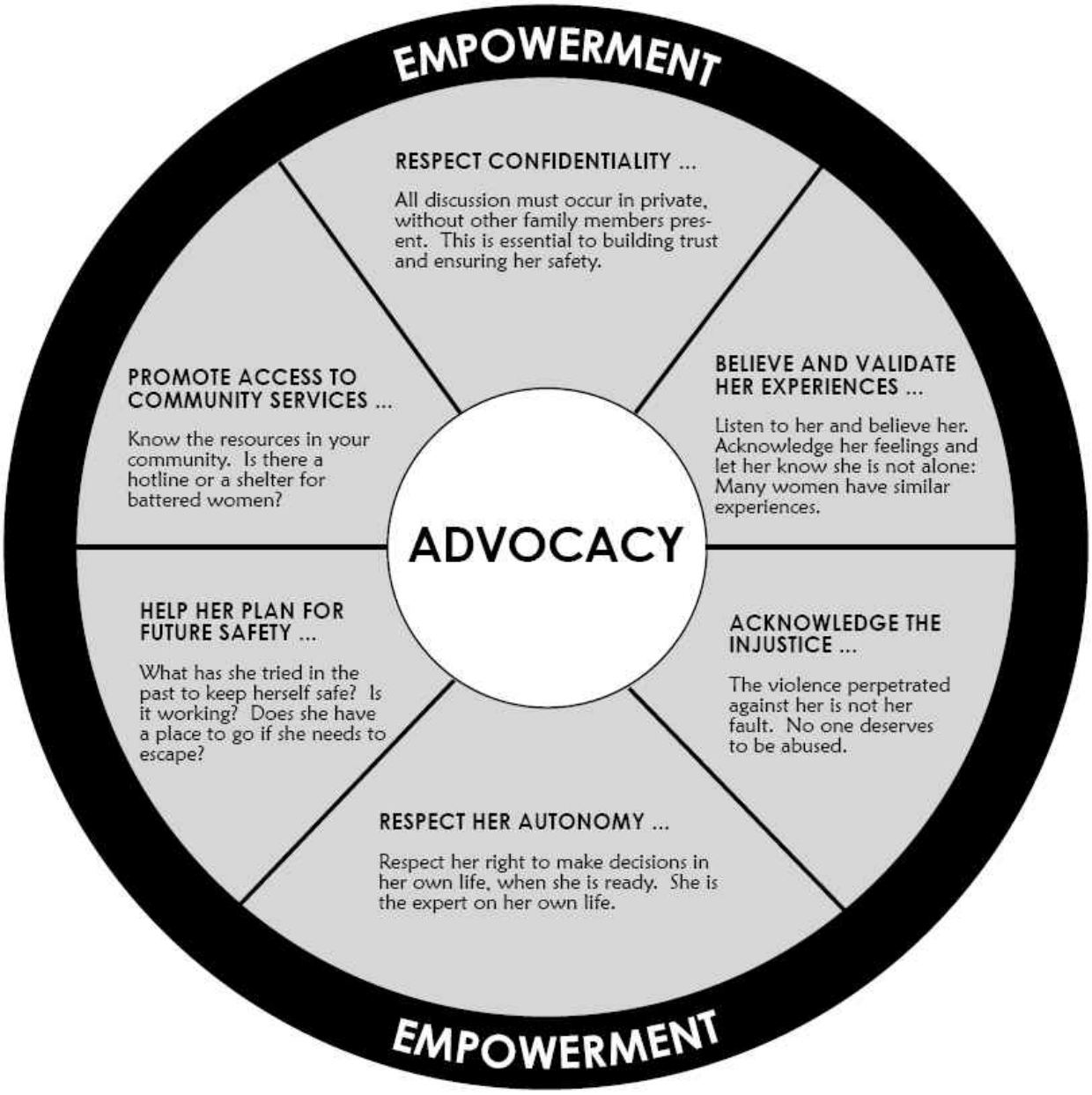
APPENDICES

Power and Control, Equality, and Advocacy Wheels

The following three wheels are useful tools developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota [62]

[62] Paymar, Michael. Violent No More (©1993Hunter HouseInc.Alameda,CA)


NONVIOLENCE
NEGOTIATION AND FAIRNESS:
Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict. Accepting changes. Being willing to compromise.
NON-THREATENING BEHAVIOR:
Talking and acting so that she feels safe and comfortable expressing herself and doing things.
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP:
Making money decisions together. Making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements.
RESPECT:
Listening to her non-judgmentally. Being emotionally affirming and understanding. Valuing her opinions.
EQUALITY
SHARED RESPONSIBILITY:
Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work. Making family decisions together.
TRUST AND SUPPORT:
Supporting her goals in life. Respecting her right to her own feelings, friends, activities, and opinions.
RESPONSIBLE PARENTING:
Sharing parental responsibilities. Being a positive, nonviolent role model for the children.
HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:
Accepting responsibility for self. Acknowledging past use of violence. Admitting being wrong. Communicating openly and truthfully.
NONVIOLENCE


EMPOWERMENT
RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY ...
All discussion must occur in private, without other family members present. This is essential to building trust and ensuring her safety.
BELIEVE AND VALIDATE HER EXPERIENCES ...
Listen to her and believe her. Acknowledge her feelings and let her know she is not alone: Many women have similar experiences.
ACKNOWLEDGE THE INJUSTICE ...
The violence perpetrated against her is not her fault. No one deserves to be abused.
RESPECT HER AUTONOMY ...
Respect her right to make decisions in her own life, when she is ready. She is the expert on her own life.
HELP HER PLAN FOR FUTURE SAFETY ...
What has she tried in the past to keep herself safe? Is it working? Does she have a place to go if she needs to escape?
PROMOTE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES ...
Know the resources in your community. Is there a hotline or a shelter for battered women?
ADVOCACY
EMPOWERMENT

A Poem on Male Privilege[63]

A poem for men who don't understand what we mean when we say they have it.

Privilege is simple:

Going for a pleasant stroll after dark

Not checking the back of your car as you get in, sleeping soundly

Speaking without interruptions, and not remembering dreams of rape

That follow you all day, that woke you crying

And Privilege is

Going to the movies and not seeing yourself terrorized,

Defamed, battered butchered seeing something else

Privilege is

Riding your bicycle across town without being screamed at or

Run off the road, not needing an abortion, taking off your shirt

On a hot day, in a crowd, not wishing you could type better just in case,

Not shaving your legs, having a decent job and expecting to keep it,

Not feeling the boss's hand up your crotch,

Dozing off on late-night buses,

Privilege is

Being the hero in the TV show not the dumb broad,

Living where your genitals are totemized not denied

Knowing your doctor won't rape you

Privilege is

Being smiled at all day by nice helpful women,

It is the way you pass judgement on their appearance with magisterial

Authority, the way you face a judge of your own sex in court and are

Over-represented in Congress and are not strip-searched for a traffic

Ticket or used as a dart board by your friendly mechanic,

Privilege is

Seeing your bearded face reflected through the history texts not only of

Your high school days but all your life,

Not being relegated to a paragraph every other chapter, the way you

Occupy entire volumes of poetry and more than your share of the couch,

Unchallenged, it is your mouthing smug, atrocious Insults at women

Who blink and change the subject – politely

Privilege is

How seldom the rapist's name appears in the papers and the way you

Smirk over your PLAYBOY

It's simply, really, Privilege

Means someone else's pain, your wealth is my terror, your uniform

Is a woman raped to death here or in Cambodia or wherever

Wherever your obscene Privilege writes your name in my blood, it's that simple,

You've always had it, that's why it doesn't seem to make you sick

At stomach, you have it, we pay for it, now do you understand

[63] D.A. Clarke from Banshee, 1981, reprinted in the Men's Activist Journal, c/o Jon Cohen, 7474 Washington Ave, St. Louis, MO, 63130, U.S.A (published up to six times a year, full of articles of interest to men who are actively pro-feminist).

Progress of Women's Rights in Canada (Adapted)

1916	**First provinces give women right to vote – Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba**
1918	**White Women are given full federal right to vote**
1920	**Women are given right to be elected to Parliament**
1921	**First woman elected to the House of Commons**
1928	**Supreme Court of Canada decides that women are not "persons" and cannot be appointed to the Senate of Canada**
1929	**British Privy Council overturns Supreme Court decision Women win the Persons' Case allowing a woman to become a senator**
1930	**First woman Senator**
1947	**Women of colour win right to vote along with their community**
1952	**First province enacts equal pay legislation – Ontario**
1955	**Restrictions on the employment of married women in the federal public service are removed**
1956	**Legislation is enacted guaranteeing equal pay for equal work within federal jurisdiction**
1957	**First woman Cabinet Minister**
1961	***Canadian Bill of Rights* is passed – Aboriginal women win right to vote along with their community**
1977	***Canadian Human Rights Act* forbids discrimination on the basis of sex and ensures equal pay for work of equal value for women; *Canadian Labour Code* is similarly amended and provides for 17 weeks of maternity leave**
1978	***Canadian Labour Code* is amended, eliminating pregnancy as a basis for lay-off or dismissal**
1982	***Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Section 28, is enacted – *Charter* guarantees apply equally to men and women**
1983	***Canadian Human Rights Act* is amended to prohibit sexual harassment and to ban discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and family or marital status**
1984	**First woman Governor General**

1984	**Canadian Constitution is amended to affirm that Aboriginal and treaty rights are guaranteed equally to both men and women**
1985	**Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* comes into effect, guaranteeing equality for all Canadians before and under law and equal protection and benefit of law**
1985	**Court Challenges Program expanded to address equality rights cases**
1985	***Indian Act* is amended, restoring status and right to band membership to Indian women who had lost such status through marriage to a non-Indian**
1986	***Employment Equity Act* is introduced, applicable to Crown corporations and federally regulated business, aimed at redressing historic and systemic discrimination of "target group" populations**
1993	**Guidelines on women refugee claimants are instituted for the Immigration and Refugee Board**
1994	**Funding for equality test cases is reinstated as Charter Law Development Program**
1995	**Gender-based analysis of legislation and policies is adopted by the federal government**

The Waves of Progress and Backlash

The following chart, which is by no means complete, depicts some of the waves of advancement in women's lives over the last six or seven decades, and also identifies the new backlash strategies that arose with each advance, pulling back on each wave like a very strong undertow. We feel it is useful to see the infinite variety of ways in which this happens. We have also included some of the strategies which may help stem the tide of Backlash.

WAVES OF FEMINISM IN CANADA: SUMMARY CHART

FIRST WAVE (TO 1960S)	**SECOND WAVE (1970S-1980S)**	**THIRD WAVE (1990S – PRESENT)**
		Themes: "Dealing with gender alone is not reflective of women's lives." (Williams 1999) A system "cannot help minority women if it cannot hear or see them". (Acewh, 2003) Reforms in law must "become a lived reality". (Sheehy, 1999)
Goals: Legal equality as to status, rights, obligations. Formal equality: equality of treatment.	**Goals**: "To stay different without being disadvantaged." Quest for substantive equality, focusing on the end result (equal benefits and burdens for women and men). May be achieved by formal equality or rules and practices specific to women. Women sought right to be free of male violence.	**Goals:** Equality for all women must acknowledge advantages of White supremacy, class privilege, the heterosexual presumption, and norms of ability (Sheehy, l999), and acknowledge the consequences for all marginalized and racialized women. All women should be equally served by the justice system. All women should be equally free of violence.

FIRST WAVE (TO 1960S)	SECOND WAVE (1970S-1980S)	THIRD WAVE (1990S – PRESENT)
Accomplishments Right to hold property. Right to vote (federal). Status of 'legal persons.'	**Accomplishments** Slow formal opening of legal profession (magistrates, law practice, jurors). Police directed to lay assault charges in wife assault; prosecutors directed not to drop charges. Violence against women seen as "a barrier to substantive equality." Marital rape of women criminalized Equality guarantees in Charter of Rights and Freedoms, sections 5 and 28. Reproductive freedom and access to abortion. Equal pay for work of equal value. Rape crisis services and women's shelters developed across the country. Violence prevention materials and training curricula developed for use by schools and social services. Women won the right to share in men's property including pensions.	**Accomplishments - Legal** Feminist women in law in positions of prominence, and in greater numbers. Gender equality within criminal law. Series of amendments to Criminal Code to redress Supreme Court rulings harmful to women in sexual assault cases. Abused women granted standing in criminal court. Dangerous offender status applied to abusive spouse. Stalking named a criminal offense. Police protocols, specialized courts, and mandatory counselling for woman abuse cases. Interdisciplinary response to woman abuse emergencies. Legal aid funding and dedicated clinics for woman abused survivors. Civil law used to hold assailants, police departments, and institutions accountable for assaults on women and children.
		Accomplishments – Other Systems Sustaining of crisis services, shelters, counselling, public education and private/ individual financial support.

FIRST WAVE (TO 1960S)	**SECOND WAVE (1970S-1980S)**	**THIRD WAVE (1990S – PRESENT)**
		Criminal Injuries Compensation legislation and Boards provide monetary redress for woman abuse survivors. Disciplinary hearings against doctors, lawyers, judges, teachers and others who violate professional standards of public or private behavior dealing with women and children.
Backlash	**Backlash**	**Backlash**
Women in Quebec were excluded from voting until 1939. Women (and men) of colour excluded from voting until 1947. Aboriginal women (and men) excluded from voting until l96l.	Reproductive freedom opposed. Extensive litigation required to achieve workplace and pension equality. Minimum funding for VAW services.	Funding cuts to all government services increase gaps between those in power and minorities of all kinds. Marginalized and racialized women are doubly disadvantaged. Family life destabilized by cuts to health care, child and elder services, social support services, and by diminished employment prospects. Series of Supreme Court rulings against women's interests in sexual assault cases. Increasing criminalization of women by 'gender neutral' application of mandatory charging directives. Mothers' custody of children affected negatively. Zero tolerance policies inconsistently used in wife assault cases. Intimate femicides continue with a 39% increase in Ontario in 2002.

FIRST WAVE (TO 1960S)	**SECOND WAVE (1970S-1980S)**	**THIRD WAVE (1990S – PRESENT)**
		Diversion of abuse cases to mediation, specialized court and counselling programmes, human rights bodies, criminal injuries compensation boards and civil lawsuits, result variously in lack of criminal accountability or punishment, and lack of publicly accessible results, and in the continued isolation of victims. Legal system has rendered criminal injuries claims onerous for women. Revictimization of women (and children).
Reclaiming Our Strengths	**Reclaiming Our Strengths**	**Reclaiming Our Strengths**
Access to post-secondary education. Number of women in professions Increases.	Public education campaigns. Growth of women's movement and feminism among both genders. Sensitivity to diversity increased, especially with refugee and immigrant influx.	Continue focus on substantive equality – women should live and experience equal status and benefit, and a life free of violence. Ensure that statistics reflect the diversity of women's lives. Public policy is based on statistics, but these are currently not collected to reflect diversity. Continue anti-racist and anti-oppression training for those in legal, health, education, social, and political institutions. An independent women's movement should continue public debate and political pressure to effect social and legal change. Continue to hold legal and other systems accountable to women. As Canadians, continue to hold government and systems (health

FIRST WAVE (TO 1960S)	**SECOND WAVE (1970S-1980S)**	**THIRD WAVE (1990S – PRESENT)**
		care being a current example) accountable to shared Canadian social values. Frame legislation, policy, and procedures within an explicit analysis of power relationships, inequality of women's lives, and social and cultural context. Include mechanisms of enforcement within the law and policy. Continue to build bridges with all equality-seeking groups in other areas of endeavour. Continue to collaborate to continue to find creative solutions by building partnerships and alliances.

Definitions of Terms [64]

Issues of Oppression

Feminist philosophy recognizes that issues of oppression are interconnected with each other and with our life experiences. We learn to behave from those closest to us, and if those people exhibit oppressive behaviour, we are likely to imitate them. It is important for us to be aware of our biases and work through our personal backgrounds so that we do not exhibit these same behaviours.

Ableism – The idea that ability is normal and disability is abnormal. We participate in abelism when we: maintain mobility and interpretation barriers to service; assume that everyone is alike in their ability; are non-inclusive of persons with disabilities in our conscious thought; assume that someone's intelligence is affected by their disability; assume that persons with disabilities deserve to be abused.

Aboriginal Peoples – In Canada, the term Aboriginal refers to people of Inuit, Métis and First Nations descent (whether status or non-status).

Ageism – The fear, hatred and discrimination toward people who are older or younger than we are. We participate in ageism when we: think that a person is too young to be able to understand what we are trying to convey, or is too young/immature to do a job properly; think that someone is stupid because they are older than we are, elderly incapable of performing certain functions such as driving; keep someone from accessing services because they are `no longer an asset to society'.

Ally – An individual that supports the struggles of a group; not part of the group him/herself.

Anti-Semitism – Hatred toward Jews; prejudicial belief in the "racial" or religious inferiority of Jews. The term itself was first used in 1879.

Bi-sexual/Bi-sexuality – Bi-sexual refers to those who are attracted to persons of the same and opposite sex. Bi-sexuality refers to the actual relationship with persons of the same and opposite sex.

Classism – The idea that some groups of people deserve to be impoverished. We participate in classism when we: think that someone is deserving of abuse because they are of a different economic status than we are; do not provide needed assistance to someone who appears to be poor; do not recognize that poverty is a social construct and not the fault of the individual; think we are better than someone else because we have more education.

Commonsense Racism – The idea that the norm in society is white, it is the idea that white is not a colour and only those who are visibly of colour are of a particular 'race'. Commonsense racism is often invisible and difficult to detect.

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[64] A special thank-you to Rai Reece, Project Coordinator, who compiled this list using a variety of sources taken from internet searches, feminist and sociological texts, key learnings from colleagues and activists in the VAW and anti-racist, anti-oppression field.

Diaspora – A historical dispersion of a group of people deriving from similar origins, i.e., the African Diaspora includes African Americans, Africans, Caribbeans, Afro-Russians, Black Brazilians, Afro Latinos, etc.

Disadvantaged – A historically oppressed group having less than sufficient resources to fund all of basic needs; without expendable income. A group characterized by disproportionate economic, social, and political disadvantages.

Diversity – A situation that includes representation of multiple (ideally all) groups within a prescribed environment, such as a university or a workplace. This word most commonly refers to differences between cultural groups, although it is also used to describe differences within cultural groups, e.g., diversity within the Asian-Canadian culture includes Korean Canadians and Japanese Canadians. An emphasis on accepting and respecting cultural differences by recognizing that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another underlies the current usage of the term.

Emigrant – One who leaves his/her country of origin to reside in a foreign country.

Equality – The belief that all individuals and groups should be free form discrimination and all other forms of oppression.

Equity – The rights and the practice of ensuring that all people have an equitable share in all social, economic, political aspects of society.

Ethnicity – A quality assigned to a specific group of people historically connected by a common national origin or language. Ethnic classification is used for identification rather than differentiation.

Essentialism – A practice of unconsciously or consciously privileging a certain ethnic group over others. This involves judging other groups by the values of one's own group.

Ethnocentricism – The tendency to view from one's own culture while diminishing that of another group/culture, regarding the other as inferior.

Eurocentricism – The practice of consciously or unconsciously privileging the culture of Europe over other cultures.

Gay Man/Men – Men who engage in same-sex relations with men.

Gender – System of sexual classification based on the social construction of the categories "men" and "women", as opposed to sex which is based on biological and physical differences which form the categories "male" and "female".

Glass ceiling – Term for the maximum position and salary some claim minorities and women are allowed to reach without any chances of further promotion or advancement within an employment scenario.

Heterosexism – The unconscious and explicit assumption that heterosexuality is the only normal mode of sexual and social life. Heterosexism is also the system of oppression against lesbians and gay men.

Heterosexual/Heterosexuality – Heterosexual refers to individuals attracted to the opposite sex. Heterosexuality refers to the actual relationship between persons of the opposite sex.

Heterosexual privilege – The benefits that a heterosexual person has automatically and that are denied lesbians and gay men.

Homophobia – The irrational fear of homosexuality, both in oneself and in others; the fear of lesbians and gay men.

Indigenous – Originating from a culture with ancient ties to the land in which a group resides.

Lesbians – Women-identified women. Most lesbians have their primary emotional, social and sexual needs met with other women. Some lesbians have a political ideology that is critical of male supremacy and the institutions that support it.

Meritocracy – This concept is connected to the idea of white privilege. Meritocracy assumes that if you work hard you get what you deserve. While working hard is an important concept in general, meritocracy purports that if someone doesn't succeed it is because they haven't worked hard enough – this ideology blames the victim as opposed to looking at the systemic barriers that have been a major factor in that person's life.

Neo-colonialism – Term for contemporary policies adopted by international and western "First world" nations and organizations that exert regulation, power and control over poorer "Third world" nations disguised as humanitarian help or aid. These policies are distinct from but related to the "original" period of colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by European nations.

Prejudice – exerting bias and bigotry based on uniformed stereotypes.

Privilege – Power and advantages benefiting a group derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other groups.

'Race' – An idea that emerges in a particular part in history. It is the idea that human beings can be divided into distinct groups and that these distinct groups have a set of characteristics that are located in their biology.

Racism – Fear, hatred and discrimination toward a person of a different race, ethnic or cultural background. A belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby its right to dominance. We participate in racism when we: laugh at jokes about a different racial group; reject members of a different racial or ethnic group; discount the intelligence of someone who is different from our racial group; harass or attack people because of their race; use references that reduce a person to animal status or other object, i.e., `coon', `raghead'.

Sex – System of sexual classification based on biological and physical differences, such as primary and secondary sexual characteristics, forming the categories "male" and "female" as opposed to gender which is based on the social construction of the categories "men" and "women".

Sexism – Fear, hatred, and discrimination toward a person of a different sex or gender. A belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all others and thereby its right to dominance. We participate in sexism when we: laugh at jokes about women or men; reject members of a

different sex or gender on the basis that they are not worthy of respect or are incompetent due to their difference; harass or attack people because of their sex or gender; use references to objects when speaking about a person, i.e., `chick', `fox', `babe'.

Stereotype – To categorize people based on an artificial construction of a certain group designed to impart the "essence" of that group, which homogenizes the group, effacing individuality and difference.

Social construction – A perception of an individual, group, or idea that is "constructed" through cultural and social practice, but appears to be "natural" or "the way things are". For example, the idea that women "naturally" like to do housework is a social construction because this idea appears "natural" due to its historical repetition, rather than it being "true" in any essential sense.

Tolerance – Acceptance and open-mindedness to different practices, attitudes, and cultures; does not necessarily mean agreement with the differences.

Transgendered – Individuals whose gender identity, expression, or behavior is not traditionally associated with their birth sex.

Transsexual(s) – Focuses on the biological and/or physical sex change from one sex to another.

White Privilege/Whiteness – The concept of whiteness takes for granted, and enacts the proliferation of the ideas of the dominant social, economic, and cultural class. Whiteness is operational and strategic within our society. These processes can operate in covert and overt ways.

RECOMMENDED READING /RESOURCES

Books

Aboriginal People, Resilience and the Residential School Legacy. (2003). The Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series, Madeleine Dion Stout & Gregory Kipling. (To order a free copy, phone 613-237-4441).

Aboriginal Domestic Violence in Canada. (2003). The Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series, Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning. (To order a free copy, phone 613-237-4441)

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Assaulted Women`s Helpline http://www.awhl.org

Advocates for Abused and Battered Lesbians http://www.nwnetwork.org/index.html

Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence http://www.atask.org

Canadian National Clearinghouse on Family Violence http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/familyviolence

DAWN Ontario: Disabled Women's Network Ontario http://dawn.thot.net/

Domestic & Family Violence International Resources: http://www.vaonline.org/dv
(Best site with links to many other country sites)

Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (Durham Region)
http://www.durhamresponsetowomanabuse.com

Education Wife Assault http://www.womanabuseprevention.com

Feminist Majority Foundation http://www.feminist.org/other/dv/dvfact.html

Feminista http://www.feminista.com

FREDA, Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children:
http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda (Canadian base)

Intermedia www.intermedia-inc.com[67]

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community http://www.dvinstitute.org

Kate's Homepage http://www.katesfeminist.info/dv/controversy /

Men Working to End Men's Violence Against Women http://www.whiteribbon.ca

Ontario Women's Justice Network (OWJN) http://www.owjn.org

Michael Flood's website http://www.xyonline.net/husbandbattering.shtml

Minnesota Center against Violence and Abuse Electronic Clearinghouse
http://www.mincava.umn.edu

Profeminist Men's Group html://www.sdnp.undp.org/gender/programmes/men/menrelated.html

Shelternet CA http://www.shelternet.ca

Status of Women Canada http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca

Gender-based Analysis Directorate htpp://www.fact.on.ca

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[67] Contact this website to order *Small Justice: Little Justice in America`s Family Courts* – an excellent video and guide that includes a critique of Dr. Richard Gardner`s writings, in particular his theory on Parental Alienation and its use in the courtroom.
*If you are viewing this on screen, for best results, block the web address, press control and click the left button of your mouse- this will take you directly to the Web site you have chosen. Close the Web window when you are done and you will be brought back to the Resource Kit.

International Instruments[68]

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.html

Database of Instruments for Gender Mainstreaming (DIGMA) http://www.amazone.be/

Gender and Health Equity Project http://www.ids.ac.uk/bridge/reports/geneqfolder.pdf

Gender in Development Programme United Nations Development Programme
http://www.undp.org/gender/
International Center for Research on Women http://www.icrw.org/

Pan American Health Organization http://www.paho.org

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/

UNICEF http://www.unicef.org/ (search Gender)

UNIFEM http://www.unifem.org/

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN INSTRAW) http://www.un-instraw.org

Women's Health in South-East Asia (South East Asia Regional Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in Health) http://w3.whosea.org/women2/gendermain.html

[68] For an excellent reference paper on International Instruments refer to Shaw, Margaret and Capobianco, (2003) *Developing Trust: International Approaches To Women`s Safety,* Montreal, Canada: International Centre for the Prevention of Crime,

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[69] This is a list of media articles collected during the course of this project. It is not meant to be a comprehensive list, but rather a sampling of the press coverage on violence against women.

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- Custody bill latest in men's rights game. (1989, Jan 14). Toronto Star.
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- Dad held in child slaying. (2000, July 15). Toronto Sun. Page News 4.
- Danger signs preceded family slaying. (2000, July 08). Globe and Mail. Page A1.
- Daughter views shooting as act of desperate man. (2000, Aug 26). Indianapolis Star.
- Defense of Christina Hoff Sommers published in The Proceedings and addresses of the American Philosophical Association, 66:7. (1993, Apr 06).
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