

Committees - Aboriginal Advisory

Prepared by Katherine Sheppard, Chair

The Aboriginal Advisory Committee completed a number of initiatives that follow directly from its mandate. Many of these initiatives had to do with cultural awareness.

First the committee developed and circulated interview questions to help shelter directors assess the cultural awareness of potential employees. Since it is vital that shelter directors themselves also communicate cultural sensitivity, the committee asked all directors to complete the checklist from the resource manual *Bible, Blankets and Beads*. Ten shelters responded, and the committee tabulated the responses for review.

The committee is pleased to report that Maskaci College has also purchased this resource manual (*Bible, Blankets and Beads*) for one of its programs.

Another responsibility of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee is to recommend a list of Aboriginal resources, which will then be made available to all shelters. This year, the following resource materials were circulated to shelters across the province:

- 1) *Seekers and Storytellers*
- 2) *Alberta Treaty First Nations Community Profiles*
- 3) *After Marriage Breakdown—On-reserve Matrimonial Home*

Respectfully submitted by Katherine Sheppard
Committee Chair

Committee Members

Kathy Sheppard, Chair
Solomon Yellowknee
Brenda Brochu
Karen Pease
Charlene Cranebear
Patti Nooskey
Heike DeGraff
Gerri Manyfingers
Joanna New
Joyce Seitz
Joline Bull



Committees – Board Governance

Prepared by Pat Garrett, Chair

This year, the Board Governance Committee reviewed a significant number of position statements, including statements on Cross Training, Public Education, Family Violence Commission, Collaborative, Co-operative Community Response, Children Exposed to Family Violence, Custody and Access, Gun Control and the Provincial Family Violence Treatment Program Framework. These have all been posted on the ACWS web page.

We also developed a skills inventory to assist in recruiting for boards and committees. A special thank you goes to our membership for their assistance in this area.

Our members are the backbone of our organization, and we worked to look at various mechanisms to improve communication with them. The primary initiative undertaken by the board this year was the “board phone around,” where each board member had the responsibility to contact board designates and paid managers in advance of our board meetings to ensure that membership issues are always our first priority.

The committee also developed a strategic planning session and board evaluation process. We are pleased to see the progress we have made in the last year on our strategic plan.

We have also seen increased community interest in becoming members of ACWS. As a result, we have developed new policies and prepared an extra-ordinary resolution that will be presented to our membership at the upcoming annual general meeting.

Submitted by Pat Garrett
Chair, Board Governance Committee

Committee Members

Pat Garrett, Chair
Pat Carter
Sr. Lucinda May Paterson
Josie Nepinak
Gerry Carter

Ethics Review Committee

Prepared by Sister Lucinda May Patterson, Chair

The Ethics Review Committee members developed a challenging Work plan for itself. Carolyn Goard and Sr. Lucinda May Patterson agreed to act as Co-Chairs of this committee while Pat Garrett agreed to serve in the Board Liaison Position.

The Ethics Review Committee met via Teleconferences and Face to Face meetings. During the year, we reviewed our terms of reference and prepared a committee budget. Given that ACWS is recognized as a Canadian Outcomes Institute research group, the Ethics Review committee reviewed data collection methods and recommended revisions with respect to the HOMES data base application process.

The committee worked hard to develop an Ethical Moral Framework, which was approved by the ACWS board.

ACWS held a Workshop on Ethical Decision Making, facilitated by Dr. Jean Pettifor, on May 13, 2004. Twenty-nine individuals participated in the workshop with all attendees stating they were more familiar with the ethical decision making as a result of the workshop.

An unexpected outcome from the Ethics Review Committee meeting was for ACWS position papers to be reviewed in light of the ethical framework.

Evaluating core and program standards based in ethical framework is in process. A joint session was held with representatives from ACWS Shelter Programs Committee and representatives from the Provincial Office to review current Combined Standards in light of our ethical framework.

The committee has also set a goal of establishing ethical practice advisors.

Respectfully submitted by Sister Lucinda May Patterson, S.A.

Committee Members

Carolyn Goard, Chair
Sr. Lucinda May Patterson,
Co-Chair
Morian Boyd
Kristine Cassie
Jim Cregan
Ermine Cummings
Pat Garrett
Dr. Jean Pettifor
Mary Jean Thompson



Committees – Education & Training

Prepared by Karen Hoover, Chair

Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference were reviewed and approved.



Dorothy Morris visits to make a donation on behalf of IODE for our CEFV Training Seminars

Children Exposed to Violence Training

Seminar Level 1: The regional training seminars are complete, with 74 shelter workers trained as well as 33 child welfare workers and 34 individuals from different organizations. These include crown prosecutors, addictions counsellors, police, family service workers, nurses, social service workers, teachers, social workers and social work students, youth service workers, health region representatives, representatives of family violence out-

reach and support programs, immigrant support group representatives and those from victims' services. Thirty shelters ordered resources.

Level 2: The program, held June 7 - 11 at Grant MacEwan's downtown campus, resulted in the training of 155 participants. Five Aboriginal trainers joined the ranks of our training personnel. Shianne Eagleheart and staff from the London Family Court Clinic provided the course, and participants reported that it was even more valuable than level one training last year. Participants were housed at the Coast Plaza Hotel, and the committee applied for a grant from the province to cover the costs.

The cross training for judges, Supports for Independence (SFI) workers and family courts workers went well, and some issues for future work were identified. The community luncheon was also very successful, and some of the participants included mayors, the Minister of Children's Services, members from local school boards and some RCMP. One program cited awarded the school-age child who was most successful in reducing violence in the school.

There were mixed reviews of the hands-on sessions. Perhaps participants misunderstood its application to the workplaces in which they worked.

No Crisis Intervention Workers Award program was held this year.

Crisis Intervention Training Workers Package

The Crisis Intervention curriculum is being drafted thanks to the work of Carol McArthur and support from Portage College. The resource will be available to shelters and is probably best suited to workers without a college education.

Committee Members

Karen Hoover, Chair
Mike Dickinson
Tess Gordey
Karen Pease
Sylvia Fleury
Brenda Bruchal
Jean Dunbar
Tracey Hartnett
Pat Vargas
Bonnie Paul
Anne Gover
Bernice Sewell
Gerry Carter
Leslie Stauffer
Karen English
Kate Hynes



Administrative Assistants Program

This program was not offered due to a lack of registrants. Potential participants cited a wide range of duties and little common ground among their reasons for not registering.

Public Service Announcements

A public service announcement developed by the Women in Film and Television Association (WIFTA) features a man watching a hockey game and hearing a violent incident next door. His predicament is whether to drown out what he hears next door with the television or to take action.

Family Violence Month - November

Theme: Family Violence is Not Your Business. It was suggested that next year we may wish to add the statement "Take the Pledge." We hope to use the public service announcement described above to work with sports teams in the area and to help bring this thought home to players and coaches.

We are proposing a public awareness initiative to increase public and community understanding of family violence. This will involve downloading posters, workbooks, and notes.

Expanded Role of ACWS

RESOLVE is conducting a review of best practices in shelters. The review will help us identify valuable educational resources that can be used by shelters across the province and assist us in identifying future roles for ACWS in Education and Training.

The Roundtables on Family Violence were held across the province, and shelters identified stakeholders and participated in the round tables. A summary report was provided to ACWS members. Issues and concerns for ACWS members include elder abuse, training needs and service gaps. Elder abuse in shelters is a topic of concern for members of ACWS.

ACWS has also recommended improvements to RCMP training, which would include risk and danger assessment and discussion on implementing the local working agreements. A committee including representative of ACWS offices, the Crown Prosecutor, the Solicitor General, OPFV trainers, police (RCMP, military police and local police) provided input into the RCMP training modules.

Danger Assessment Training for shelter workers was facilitated by Dr. Jacqueline Campbell, and a

Submitted by Karen Hoover
Chair, Education and Training Committee



Committees - Social & Legal Issues

Prepared by Lise Blanchette, Chair

As the chairperson for the ACWS Social and Legal Issues Committee, it is my pleasure to present the highlights of our advocacy efforts for the 2003 – 2004 board year.

The Social and Legal Issues Committee monitored and responded to legislative amendments to the Child Welfare Act and was successful in getting two in-house amendments to the new act that refer to family violence passed. In addition, one of our committee members, Jean McBean, prepared an article on the new family law legislation that highlighted the changes and the recognition of family violence as a social issue.

The committee made various submissions on the proposed changes to the federal Divorce Act as it relates to custody and access issues; however, it appears that this initiative has been shelved for the next couple of years.

The committee was involved in a number of ways on the impact of gun control, such as representing the ACWS at the Firearms Centre's consultation in Calgary. We have sent a number of letters to, and initiated meetings with, elected officials and government representatives, such as MP's (especially female MP's), MLA's, the ministers of justice and public security, and the Prime Minister's office.

With input from our members, the committee prepared a report on the need for second stage housing. Second stage statistics show that 1,868 women were referred to their local housing authority, but the majority of women did not receive assistance. Due to the large demand, very few women who need this second stage of assistance are able to access it, and the housing authority waiting lists leave them few options. Therefore, many women are returning to their abusive relationships.

The committee sent out information to shelters on the new Supports for Independence (SFI) regulations. In addition, ACWS continues to advocate for increased SFI rates and support for women and attended a number of consultations on the new Human Resources Act as it relates to Supports for Independence.

The committee was involved in a review of the RCMP *Memorandum of Understanding* and local working agreements with the shelters. As a result of our discussions with the RCMP, they made minor changes to their training content. The Solicitor General has committed to developing a three-year training program, which will provide consistent training to all police services. We pointed out that military police were not identified as part of their policing committee, and they will now be asked to participate. The first training is geared for September at the Police College here in Edmonton.

The committee collated statistics on Emergency Protection Orders (EPO's) regionally to improve the results, i.e. the number of EPO's implemented and the opportunity for women to work with local authorities in issuing Emergency Protection Orders.

The committee invited members to a number of consultations and kept them informed on the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying. The committee identified five key components to assist our member shelters in getting ready for their regional roundtable on family violence.

Social change

Solutions

- Early intervention programs for children's groups, day cares, adolescents, seniors.
- A higher priority on adequate funding for public awareness campaigns, including family violence prevention month; build on what ACWS was able to do last year.

Committee Members

Lise Blanchette, Chair
Lori Phillips
Mary Jean Thompson
Anita Taylor
Heike DeGraff
Carol Hicken,
Kristine Cassie
Pat Vargas
Sandra Danco
Cecile Lavoie
Jean McBean
Dawn Nelson
Simonne Walsh



Provincial leadership

Solutions

- Establish a Family Violence Commission with clear accountability by funding agencies and government departments.

A collaborative, coordinated community response

Solutions

- Develop a common philosophy and principles for a collaborative, coordinated community model that applies to both governmental and non-governmental agencies.
- Create dedicated positions to support and assist communities in developing their own models and responses for high need, specialized groups (i.e. elder abuse, disabled, same sex, immigrant women, etc.).
- Place a priority on providing supports for people with disabilities within existing programs.
- Recognize shelters as part of a collaborative response team. Shelters have expertise in family violence issues; they are not solely a place to stay.

Services and supports

Solutions

- Update funding and staffing models for women's shelters, including crisis line support, follow-up, outreach, education and legal advocacy.
- There is also a need for specialized shelter programs for children, as well as for child and youth groups across the province, both while in shelter and as follow-up.
- Expand the availability of emergency/safe housing: immediately fund seniors' shelters, develop funding formula for second stage; fund un-funded shelter beds and increase the capacity in areas where people are turned away.
- Provide transitional support: increase funding and ensure that every shelter has second stage referral apartments available in their community.
- Ensure adequate protection services for women and children in abusive relationships. The first priority should be to keep women and children safe.
- Address concerns regarding custody and access disputes; include rebuttal presumption, children's lawyers.
- Fund seven safe visitation centres across the province.
- Ensure that services and supports respond to those affected by family violence and bullying: need for housing, increases in social assistance.
- Ensure fair access to legal aid for women seeking assistance in the family law area. Priority up to now has been on providing legal support in the criminal justice system (which benefits the perpetrator).
- Make changes in the courts and the justice system: sharing of information, treating family violence as a crime.

Accountability

Solutions

- All departments need to track their expenditures and services related to family violence.
- Use common definitions.
- Enforce gun control legislation, charging guidelines.
- Implement stiffer sentences for serial abusers and make perpetrator accountability a priority.

The ACWS Social and Legal Issues Committee is working on behalf of women and families throughout the province. More specifically, that means on behalf of our members who assist women who are in crisis, women who are trying to leave abusive relationships and women who are trying to move on with their lives and become self sufficient. With the ACWS board, provincial coordinator and all the members of ACWS, we will continue to work with organizations across the province and with the Government of Alberta to determine how best to serve our client base and focus on re-evaluating the needs and issues we continue to face with ONE VOICE.

Submitted by Lise Blanchette



Committees—Shelter Programs

Prepared by Joie Dery, Chair

Chairperson, ACWS Social and Legal Issues Committee
Several initiatives undertaken by the ACWS fall under the Shelter Programs Committee.

Shelter Emergency Fund

Supported by the Anonymous Donor, the Shelter Emergency Fund was set up to enable shelters access to minimal funding to meet the demands of unexpected and/or non-budgeted expenses that might occur, and the shelter is not able to operate without the required repairs or replacement. These expenses are usually for equipment or mechanical systems. Several applications have been funded to date, such as appliances, faulty elevator, security system, and sewer backup. The program was evaluated six months after its' commencement with the anonymous donor staff. It appears to be working well, and at this point is continuing.

Women's Shelter Information System

A very challenging year to say the least! Over the past twelve months, all funded shelters have gone 'on-line' with the Canadian Outcomes Institute (COI) for the collection of client statistical information. Strong partnerships have been formed between COI, ACWS, the shelters and the Government. The process has not been without many problems! As all parties become more familiar with the system, the definitions, and the procedures, there appears to be a faint light at the end of the tunnel. It has become very evident that there will be a need for ongoing technical support/training for the program, and that there are still system 'glitches' that need to be worked out. The whole process has been very time consuming, and everyone involved needs to be congratulated for their perseverance and dedication to make this endeavor work the way it is intended to. It will be a marvelous tool to assist all partners!

Compendium of Services

Services provided by all the member shelters were collected and put into a format that can be easily updated. The resulting document is useful to shelter members, the Council, and others seeking information regarding Alberta Shelters. The plan is to update the document on a regular basis.

Shelter Funding

Changes to core funding have occurred over the past year.

- ✓ All shelter contracts (providing core funding) have been removed from their respective regions to one central location, which was done to ensure more consistency of funding across the province.
- ✓ Core Funding - The government recognized that shelters were having great difficulty in managing to meet the major increases to utility and insurance costs. Based on numbers from the previous year, funding was increased to assist to meet these costs for six months of the year. Unfortunately the costs continue to rise, so shelters are behind again. Adjustments were made to other components of the contracts as well, except in the area of staffing, which had received major increases to all funded positions the year before.

Committee Members

Joie Dery, Chair
Marg Luger
Moriah Boyd
Kathleen Nakagawa
Pat Garrett
Mary Ann Sanderson
Donna Getschel
Kathy Sheppard
Carolyn Goard
Pat Vargas
Brenda Hill
Sandra Danco
Patsi Tailfeathers

Crisis Lines

The government has requested and received information on shelter operated crisis lines and the staffing and other costs required to maintain these lines. We have received no feed back on this to this point.

Staffing Model

Information was received from all shelters as to what they perceived their staffing needs to be, both by position and by priority. Staffing levels had to be sufficient enough to ensure safe operation according to shelter standards and required legislation. Staffing models have been completed for the Emergency Shelters, Second Stage Shelters, and Seniors Programs. These models are being presented to the government for consideration. Obtaining consensus for the models has been difficult, as shelters vary greatly according to the needs of respective communities. The committee has agreed that some flexibility within the model would be beneficial to all.

Shelter Standards

It has become evident, but really not a surprise, that the operating standards under which shelters are now guided are in severe need of updating and expanding. ACWS and the committee wanted to ensure that our standards fit into the adopted ethical and moral framework. To that end, the Ethics Committee is assisting by reworking the wording and reorganizing our current document, and suggesting additions that may be required. Our goal is to have a set of standards that not only meet, but also surpass government requirements.

Group Insurance

Member shelters are now contributing to the administration costs of this program, which takes a large burden off ACWS staff. These insurance costs are also continuing to rise significantly, both for the staff covered by the program and the employers who contribute to the premiums. The program is currently under review and cost estimates are being sought from other carriers. The intent will be to find most cost-effective program available.

All Shelter Program initiatives require input from the shelters, and the committee appreciates the fabulous cooperation we have had. We would also like to thank the ACWS staff for their countless hours of support and continued input.



ACWS Membership

A Safe Place	Sherwood Park
Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter	Calgary
Bigstone Cree Nation Women's Emergency Shelter,	Wabasca
Brenda Strafford Centre	Calgary
Brigantia Place	Camrose
Brooks & District Women's Safe Shelter Society	Brooks
Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter	Calgary
Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter	Red Deer
Columbus House of Hope	St. Paul
Community Crisis Society	Strathmore
Crossroads Resource Centre	Fairview
Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society	Calgary
Eagle Women's Emergency Shelter	Black Diamond
Edmonton Senior Safe Housing	Edmonton
Edmonton Women's Shelter	Edmonton
Ermineskin Women's Shelter	Maskwaci
Grande Cache Transition House	Grande Cache
Hope Haven Society	Lac La Biche
Kerby Centre	Calgary
La Salle Residence	Edmonton
Lloydminster Interval Home	Lloydminster
Lurana Shelter	Edmonton
Mikisew Cree First Nation (Paspew House)	Fort Chipewyan
Odyssey House	Grande Prairie
Peace River Regional Women's Shelter	Peace River
Phoenix Safe House	Medicine Hat
Pincher Creek Women's Emergency Shelter	Pincher Creek
Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre	Cold Lake
Safe Home	High Level
Sheriff King Home	Calgary
Sonshine Community Services	Calgary
Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter	Enilda
Taber & District Family Crisis Intervention Society (Safe Haven)	Taber
Unity House	Fort McMurray
Wellspring Family Resource & Crisis Centre	Whitecourt
Wings of Providence	Edmonton
Yellowhead Emergency Shelter	Hinton
Youville Women's Residence	Calgary
YWCA of Banff	Banff
YWCA Harbour House	Lethbridge

Associate Members

Edmonton John Howard Society	Edmonton
Inner City Mission Centre—Women's Dream Centre	Edmonton
Mountain Rose Women's Shelter Association	Rocky Mountain House



ACWS — Board of Directors

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Mike Dickinson, **Vice President**
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Gerry Carter
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Maureen Watson, **Office Administrator**

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Alberta Children's Services
Status of Women
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