

# British Columbia's PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT | 2016



Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and  
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Location/Phase: Parts 213 Winnipeg

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Add'l info: P02-03 P03 P0401

Date: OCT 04 2018

Initials	I/D	Entered
<u>53</u>		<u>42</u>

DELIVERING ON GOVERNMENT'S VISION THAT ALL BRITISH COLUMBIANS  
ARE SAFE IN RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITIES.

*Prepared by the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence*



Ministry of  
Children and Family  
Development





## Acknowledgment

*The Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV) would like to acknowledge the dedication of community anti-violence and government partners over the years, in addition to the multi-sector collaboration and coordination that occurred in our province this year to strengthen the systemic response to domestic violence.*



# CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER . . . . .	1
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	4
BRITISH COLUMBIA'S PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN . . . . .	8
YEAR TWO FOCUS AREAS:	
\$5.5 MILLION INVESTMENT. . . . .	10
1   <i>Direct Services for Women, Children and Men</i> . . . . .	10
2   <i>Direct Services For Aboriginal Children, Youth and Families.</i> .	11
3   <i>Direct Services for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence</i> . . . . .	12
4   <i>Direct Services for Rural and Remote Communities</i> . . . . .	13
RESPONSE AREAS: CONTINUED EFFORTS. . . . .	14
1   <i>Public Awareness and Prevention</i> . . . . .	14
2   <i>Supports and Services for Survivors.</i> . . . .	18
3   <i>Justice System Response</i> . . . . .	22
4   <i>Coordination, Information Sharing and Referral</i> . . . . .	24
5   <i>Research, Training and Evaluation</i> . . . . .	28
MOVING FORWARD . . . . .	32
REFERENCES. . . . .	33



## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



It gives me great pleasure to present the second annual report on British Columbia's three-year Provincial Domestic Violence Plan. Launched in February 2014, the plan aims to make B.C. a safer place for anyone affected by domestic violence. During the first year of the plan, we made excellent progress in raising awareness about this serious issue and leveraging existing resources to fund organizations in their efforts to end domestic violence.

In year two, we continued to work with our ministry and community partners and distributed \$5.5 million to build

stronger supports and services that will help ensure that British Columbians are safer in their relationships and communities.

I'm pleased to acknowledge that we've made advances and we remain committed to working in consultation with our anti-violence partners to provide investments and service improvements across key target areas through the third year of the plan.

We all have a role to play in protecting our families, friends, neighbours and co-workers from violence. It's only by working together that we can truly address this issue. We're stronger together, and together we can give people who are affected by domestic violence the strength to break the silence and speak up. Awareness campaigns like *#SaySomething* and *Be More than a Bystander* are making a difference. I'd like to thank everyone involved for their efforts towards ending domestic violence – and all forms of violence – in B.C.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scadieux".

STEPHANIE CADIEUX  
MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

### PREMIER CHRISTY CLARK:

*"Domestic violence remains a major societal challenge that can significantly damage the lives of anyone affected by it. Nobody should be left to face this alone. That's why it's vital that we continue our work to change the behaviours and attitudes that perpetuate violence, while at the same time raising awareness and offering support for survivors. Now in its third year, the Provincial Domestic Violence Plan plays an important role in this process, and I am pleased to see that it is building on the strong foundation laid by the success of year two. We are making strides towards our Vision for a Violence Free B.C. through this plan and the successful #SaySomething campaign. We are on our way to making B.C. a safer, better place to live, work and raise a family."*

## Commonly Used Acronyms

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC .....	AMSSA
BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres .....	BCAAFC
BC Society of Transition Houses .....	BCSTH
Community Coordination for Women's Safety .....	CCWS
<i>Child, Family and Community Service Act</i> .....	CFCSA
Child Protection Mediation Program .....	CPMP
Domestic Violence Unit .....	DVU
Ending Violence Association of BC .....	EVABC
Family Justice Counsellors .....	FJCS
<i>Family Law Act</i> .....	FLA
First Nations Health Authority .....	FNHA
The Homeless Prevention Program .....	HPP
Inter-agency Case Assessment Teams .....	ICATS
Legal Services Society .....	LSS
Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women .....	MACAW
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls ...	MMIWG
Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities .....	MOSAIC
Protection Order Registry .....	POR
Protection Order .....	PO
Protective Intervention Order .....	PIO
Provincial Health Services Authority .....	PHSA
Representative for Children and Youth .....	RCY
<i>Residential Tenancy Act</i> .....	RTA
Safe Relationships, Safe Children .....	SRSC
Transition House and Safe Home .....	TH and SH
Truth and Reconciliation Commission .....	TRC
Violence Free BC Strategy .....	VFBC



## Key Government Partners

- » B.C. Housing
- » Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs)
- » Ministers Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women (MACAW)
- » Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR)
- » Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
- » Ministry of Education (EDUC)
- » Ministry of Health (HLTH)
- » Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour (JTST)
- » Ministry of Justice (JAG)
- » Ministry of Natural Gas Development and Responsible for Housing (MNGD)
- » Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG)
- » Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (SDSI)
- » Ministry of Transportation (TRAN)
- » Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV)
- » Public Service Agency (PSA)
- » Representative for Children and Youth (RCY)
- » WorkSafeBC

## Key Community Partners

### PODV WORKS WITH MANY COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING:

- » Abbotsford Community Services (ACS)
- » Atira Women's Resource Society
- » BC Aboriginal Association of Friendship Centres (BCAFC)
- » BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)
- » BC Federation of Foster Parents Association (BCFFPA)
- » BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH)
- » BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre
- » Bridges for Women Society
- » Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC)
- » Chimo Community Services
- » Community Coordination for Women's Safety (CCWS)
- » Disability Alliance BC (DABC)
- » DisAbled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN)
- » DIVERSEcity
- » Ending Violence Association of BC (EVAABC)
- » FREDA (Feminist Research Education Development Action) Centre for Research on Violence Against Women
- » Haven Society
- » Jane Doe Legal Network
- » Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU)
- » Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
- » Metis Nation of Greater Victoria
- » Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC)
- » The Men's Centre: Resources for Men and their Families
- » Network to Eliminate Violence in Relationships (NEVR)
- » Pacific Centre Family Services Association (PCFSA)
- » PIVOT Legal Society
- » Royal Roads University (RRU)
- » Simon Fraser University (SFU)
- » Surrey Women's Centre (SWC)
- » The Asia Foundation
- » The John Howard Society of BC
- » University of British Columbia (UBC)
- » University of Fraser Valley (UFV)
- » University of Victoria (UVic)
- » Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society
- » Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services (VLMMFSS)
- » West Coast Leaf – Women's Legal Education and Action Fund
- » West Coast Men's Support Society
- » Western University (WU)
- » Women in Need Gaining Strength (WINGS)

## DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

*“Violence against women in relationships” and alternate terms used when referring to “domestic violence” (including “spousal violence,” “spousal abuse,” “spouse assault,” “intimate partner violence,” and “relationship violence”) are defined as physical or sexual assault, or the threat of physical or sexual assault against a current or former intimate partner whether or not they are legally married or living together at the time of the assault or threat. In addition to physical and sexual assault, domestic violence also includes criminal harassment, threats or mischief, where there is a reasonable basis to conclude that the act was done to cause, or did in fact cause, fear, trauma, suffering or loss to the intimate partner. Intimate partner relationships include heterosexual and same-sex relationships.*

*Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy (2010)*

## INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a complex social issue and a violation of human rights that affects individuals, families and communities all over the world. It can also be referred to as spousal violence/abuse, wife assault, relationship violence or intimate partner violence. Domestic violence can happen to anyone. It occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds and economic levels. Abuse in relationships is never acceptable, whether it is coming from a man, woman, young person or older person.

Worldwide an estimated 30% of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner (World Health Organization, 2016). Equally alarming is that 52% of spousal violence victims say that their children witnessed this violence (Statistics Canada, 2012). While not all children are affected by domestic violence in the same way, it is well understood that the long-term consequences of exposure to domestic violence can negatively affect a child's development, including physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and social aspects (World Health Organization, 2016).



The prevalence of domestic violence in British Columbia (B.C.) is a significant social issue. In 2014, there were 11,624 victims of police-reported intimate partner violence in B.C. (Statistics Canada, 2016). In 2015/16, 22% of the Reports to Crown Counsel from the police or another investigative agency received by the Criminal Justice Branch, Ministry of Justice, were identified as being domestic violence related offences. This is significant considering that 70% of domestic violence incidents are never reported to police (Statistics Canada, 2016). While domestic violence can happen to anyone, there are some groups who are at increased risk for domestic violence. The latest trends indicate that:

- » Individuals who self-identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual are twice as likely as heterosexuals to report being the victim of spousal violence (Statistics Canada, 2016). Transgender people also have an elevated risk of experiencing spousal violence (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Program, 2015).
- » Aboriginal people are more than twice as likely as non-Aboriginal people to report experiencing spousal violence, according to data from the past five years. Additionally, Aboriginal people more often reported having experienced abuse as children – a factor shown to be associated with spousal victimization later in life (Statistics Canada, 2016).
- » Women and men with disabilities experience higher rates of physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner than those without disabilities (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2012). A Canadian study found that while only 20% of all Canadian women live with a disability, over 40% of these women

have experienced some form of violence in their lives (Disability Alliance BC, 2016).

- » Men and women report similar rates of spousal violence. However, women are twice as likely to experience severe forms of violence, such as sexual assault and physical violence, including being beaten, choked or threatened with a knife or gun (Statistics Canada, 2016).
- » Female victims aged 15 to 19 years are more than 13 times more likely to experience intimate partner homicide than their male counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2016).
- » More research on the impacts of domestic violence on immigrant and refugee populations is necessary. Some studies show that these groups are particularly at risk due to language barriers, social isolation, lack of financial resources and lack of knowledge about immigration or criminal justice systems (Runner, Yoshihama, & Novick, 2009; UNWomen, 2016).

In the past few years, the issue of domestic violence in B.C. has received significant attention and action following two reports published by the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY): *"Honouring Christian Lee: No Private Matter: Protecting Children Living with Domestic Violence"* (2009) and *"Honouring Kaitlynn, Max and Cordon: Make Their Voices Heard Now"* (2012). Findings from these reports acknowledged the need for stronger, better integrated and coordinated responses in B.C., in addition to training for multi-sector professionals. Government continues to work with various community anti-violence partners to improve the systemic response to domestic violence throughout the province.

JOANNE BAKER,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR –  
*BC Society of Transition  
Houses*

*“The cross-sectoral conference, TOGETHER! BC COLLABORATES to Stop Sexual and Domestic Violence Conference (BC Collaborates), held in Vancouver in December 2015, provided a notable opportunity for the BC Society of Transition Houses to work with PODV and other community and government partners to create an event focused on coordinated responses to violence. Collaboration is central to the mandate of PODV and the conference provided a valuable opportunity for separate but inter-connected sectors to come together to discuss ways in which collaborative work can make a vital difference to preventing violence against women, children and youth.”*

## WHO IS PODV?

To eliminate domestic violence, we must share information, break down silos and work together. In 2012, the B.C. government established the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV) in response to the RCY's *report* on the Allen Schoenborn case, which explored the systemic issues that led to the murders of three children by their father. PODV is hosted at the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and is B.C.'s permanent lead for government on the issue of domestic violence.

PODV is accountable for improving coordination and collaboration between various government ministries, community and anti-violence sectors, and for strengthening the province's systemic response to domestic violence. PODV's mandate, as a central coordinating office, is to work with community, cross-ministry and Crown corporation partners and provide expertise and leadership to improve and strengthen services and supports for children, youth, women and families who experience domestic violence. Ministry and anti-violence community partners remain responsible for individual client advocacy, program implementation and direct service delivery.

In February 2014 PODV released the three-year *Provincial Domestic Violence Plan* (the plan). The plan works in harmony with the Violence Free BC Strategy (VFBC), which is a blueprint for addressing violence against women in B.C. over the next decade. The plan is the result of government, public and anti-violence stakeholder consultations and includes a commitment to monitor, evaluate, report progress and consult with stakeholders to support a coordinated, systemic approach to domestic violence.

Through collaborative and strong relationships with various cross-ministry partners and the anti-violence sector, PODV has provided leadership that has resulted in numerous improvements. In the fall of 2015, for example, PODV, the Public Service Agency, the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, and WorkSafeBC partnered to review and enhance Public Service occupational safety and health policies and procedures related to domestic violence in the workplace, with a view to increasing employee awareness and accessibility to resources.

On a broader level, the *TOGETHER! BC COLLABORATES to Stop Sexual and Domestic Violence Conference* (BC Collaborates) is another example of a cross-sector innovation that supports the collective efforts to eliminate violence in relationships. In December 2015, nearly 900 multi-sector professionals from around the province gathered in Vancouver to participate in this joint training forum.



The conference was hosted by the BC Association of Chiefs of Police, BC Society of Transition Houses, Ending Violence Association of BC, PODV and partner ministries, Police Victim Services of BC, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). This large-scale collaborative training forum was the first of its kind in B.C.'s history. To build on the momentum and success of this cross-sector event, government and the Child Welfare League of Canada will co-host a training forum for strategic leaders and policy makers in social service organizations in the fall of 2016. The training will focus on strengthening policies, programs and service-delivery models to prevent and respond to domestic violence and child abuse.

Government remains committed to addressing the serious issue of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, and as such, the plan includes an Aboriginal focus. The 94 recommendations put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have inspired national awareness about the history of our country, and have increased the space for reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

Canadians. PODV works with Aboriginal organizations, as well as the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) and the Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women (MACAW), to ensure the work of the Office is responsive to the needs of Aboriginal peoples.

Collaborative partnerships have resulted in numerous advancements in B.C., including an event that arose from the first National Roundtable for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), held in Ottawa in 2015. The Province worked with Aboriginal leadership and co-hosted a Gathering for Families of MMIWG in Prince George from January 31-February 2, 2016. More than 300 family members attended, representing over 100 missing and murdered women and girls. Family members participated in cultural healing ceremonies and provided recommendations for stopping the violence. B.C.'s Memorial Quilt, a legacy piece created by family members at the Gathering, will be on display at the Legislature until the end of August 2016.

**CHASTITY DAVIS, CHAIR – Minister's  
Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women**

*"On June 13 2014, on the recommendation of the Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women (MACAW), government signed a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Aboriginal leadership confirming our shared commitment to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls. Since the signing of the MOU a new Joint Aboriginal – Government Partners Table of Stopping Violence Against Aboriginal Women has been established, with the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV) a key participant at this table. PODV's three-year Provincial Domestic Violence Plan includes a strong Aboriginal focus and a continued commitment to work closely with the MACAW and the Ministry for Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. We look forward to our ongoing and strong relationship with PODV to end domestic violence against Aboriginal women and children."*



KAREN MARTIN,  
PROJECT AND TRAINING  
COORDINATOR –  
*Disability Alliance BC  
(DABC)*

*“PODV’s Provincial Domestic Violence Plan identifies the need for supporting persons with disabilities. This aligns with Disability Alliance BC’s anti-violence work, so it made sense for us to develop a relationship with PODV and provide input into their research report, The Impact of Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities. DABC hopes to continue its collaboration with PODV to address the needs of women with disabilities experiencing domestic violence.”*

# British Columbia’s PROVINCIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW

PODV led the development of a comprehensive, cross-ministry three-year Provincial Domestic Violence Plan (the plan), which was released in 2014. PODV consulted with anti-violence community partners, Aboriginal leaders and the public to inform the contents of the plan, which aims to strengthen the systemic response to domestic violence by building on the valuable and tireless work of the anti-violence sector and other government ministries. This is being achieved through:

- » **AN INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED RESPONSE STRATEGY.**
- » **INCREASING SAFETY THROUGH ENHANCED INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN ALL SERVICE PROVIDERS ACROSS SYSTEMS.**
- » **IMPROVED DIRECT SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS, CHILDREN AND PERPETRATORS.**

As seen in Figure 1 (on p.9), the plan is centered on safety in interpersonal relationships, and on the key actions that are necessary to address domestic violence. PODV mapped current services and supports throughout the province and consulted with relevant community partners, ministry partners and the public to develop the key response and focus areas in the plan.

The plan applies a diversity lens, inclusive of approaches to address the needs of immigrant and refugee populations and people with disabilities, and also takes culturally responsive and holistic approaches to help meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples.

The **FIVE KEY** response areas identified in the consultation include:

- 1. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PREVENTION.**
- 2. SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS.**
- 3. JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**
- 4. COORDINATION, INFORMATION SHARING AND REFERRAL.**
- 5. RESEARCH, TRAINING AND EVALUATION.**



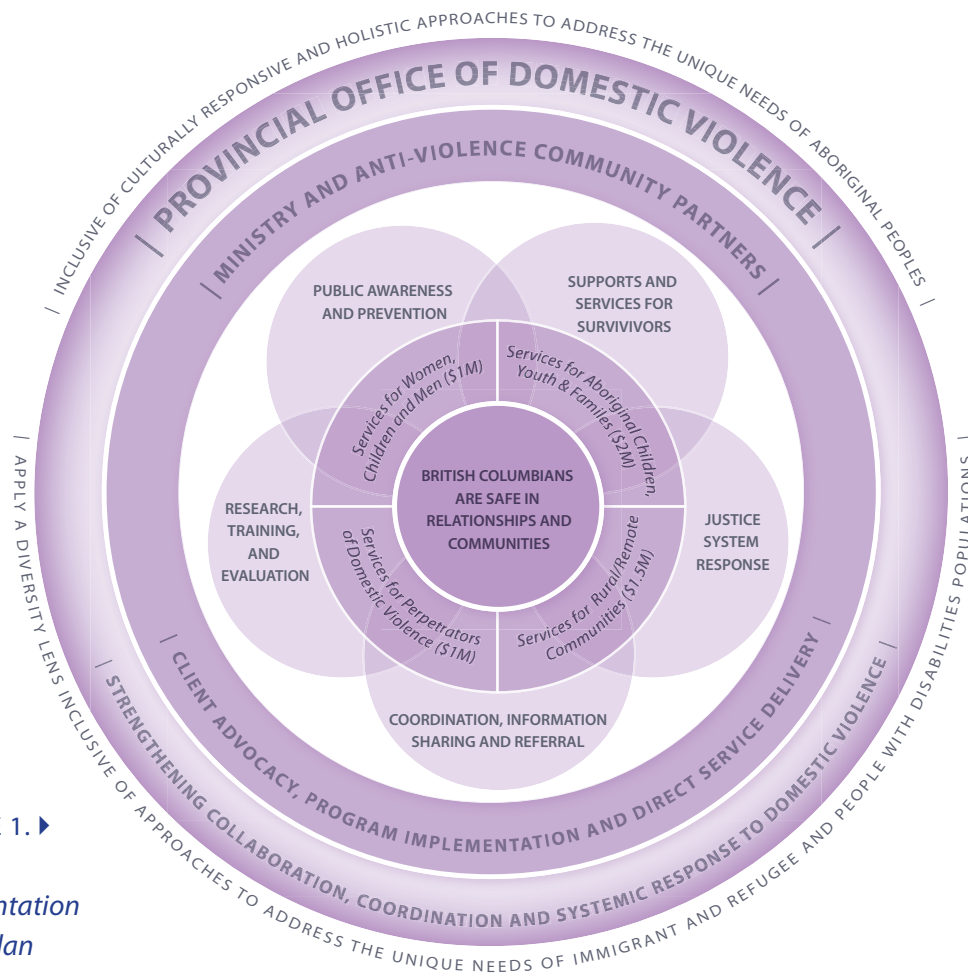
In addition to these response areas, Years Two and Three of the plan included a \$5.5 million investment in the following focus areas:

1. **DIRECT SERVICES FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN AND MEN (\$1 MILLION).**
2. **DIRECT SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES (\$2 MILLION).**
3. **DIRECT SERVICES FOR PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (\$1 MILLION).**
4. **DIRECT SERVICES FOR RURAL/REMOTE COMMUNITIES (\$1.5 MILLION).**

## THE PLAN'S PROGRESS

The key ministries and Crown corporations that share responsibility for addressing domestic violence have demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to fulfilling the specific actions, targets and timelines under the plan. PODV plays a lead role in bringing together cross-ministry Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) and Domestic Violence Leads on a regular basis to ensure the implementation of the plan is on track.

This report reflects work completed during the Year Two reporting period (April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016) and includes a number of actions and strategies that were initiated in Year One and will continue into Year Three. In some sections, aggregate numbers are provided for a longer period of time to reflect work that is already underway in B.C.



**FIGURE 1. ▶**  
*A visual  
representation  
of the plan*

## WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO

**\$1 MILLION** investment to assist the start-up and implementation of Domestic Violence Units (DVUs) across the province that will intervene in domestic violence cases and provide direct services to victims, children and perpetrators of violence.

# YEAR TWO FOCUS AREAS: \$5.5 MILLION INVESTMENT

## 1 | Direct Services for Women, Children and Men

Domestic Violence Units (DVUs) are a model of co-located service delivery that pair a dedicated police officer(s) with a community-based victim service worker(s) to address highest risk victims of domestic violence. In some cases, DVUs also co-locate a child welfare worker from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). DVU staff typically work in the same room together, which allows them to immediately triage incoming cases to ensure that safety planning and system responses are coordinated.

DVUs are administered through a multi-agency governance model that allows for a collaborative partnership with a focus on both victim safety and offender accountability. They allow for joint case coordination, risk assessment, offender management and victim safety planning, with each partner bringing their own experience and expertise to the table.

There are seven full-time DVUs in B.C.: Abbotsford, Capital Region (Greater Victoria), Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Surrey and Vancouver. Work is also underway to develop new DVUs in Prince George and on the North Shore (North Vancouver and West Vancouver). Moving forward, the government is interested in learning more about how these units are operating, identifying best practices, and exploring options to evaluate existing units.

In 2014, organizations received more than \$1 million in civil forfeiture funding to support existing and new DVUs across the province. This funding led to the creation of the Surrey, Kelowna and Nanaimo DVUs. In 2015, organizations received over \$75,000 in civil forfeiture funding to develop or enhance existing DVUs, and over \$148,000 to develop or enhance Inter-agency Case Assessment Teams (ICATs) and other coordinating committees on violence against women in relationships. In March 2016, an additional \$700,000 in civil forfeiture funding was provided to support existing and new DVUs in the province, bringing the total investment in DVUs since the launch of the Provincial Plan to over \$1.7 million.

## 2 | Direct Services For Aboriginal Children, Youth and Families

A complex set of factors – including colonization, the intergenerational effects of residential schools and other assimilation policies, racism and poverty, and lack of stable housing – contribute to the increased likelihood that Aboriginal women and girls will experience violence. Our government is committed to working with Aboriginal women and leaders to develop the necessary support systems to address the risks and violence that many Aboriginal women are currently exposed to.

Recognizing the great diversity amongst Aboriginal people in B.C., government is committed to supporting the development of responses that are effective for different communities. The plan acknowledges this reality and includes a \$2 million investment to develop and deliver programs specifically for Aboriginal women, men and children affected by domestic violence in various communities across the province:

- » \$1.5 million has been distributed to 24 Aboriginal partner agencies. Seven projects each received \$25,000 to enhance current projects or programs and 17 received up to \$70,000 to start new projects or programs.
- » \$500,000 has been distributed to 56 transition houses and safe homes to provide support to Aboriginal women and children who have limited access to transportation and social housing options.

To ensure the funding was allocated in a transparent and meaningful manner, government established a partnership table comprising representatives from the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC), MACAW, PODV, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.

This funding supports various communities to incorporate traditional teachings that will help address the unique needs of Aboriginal communities in preventing domestic violence.

### WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO

**\$2 MILLION** investment to develop and deliver programs specifically for Aboriginal women, men, children and youth who have been or are at risk of being affected by domestic violence (this includes potential abusers/perpetrators). Programs will reflect best practices and will be delivered by First Nations communities, Métis agencies and Aboriginal organizations. The investment will support staff hiring to deliver direct services to victims, children and perpetrators of domestic violence in communities.



WHAT WE SAID  
WE WOULD DO

**\$1 MILLION** investment to provide direct services to perpetrators of domestic violence or potential abusers prior to their involvement with the criminal justice system.

### 3 | Direct Services for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

To support the delivery of direct services to domestic violence perpetrators, \$1 million has been made available to work on programming to help them before they are charged, convicted or sentenced for an offence, including the enhancement and evaluation of culturally appropriate programs.

To support some of this work a reference group of stakeholders was assembled and consulted and information has been gathered from literature and interviews with service providers who currently have experience with domestic violence prevention programming.

In addition, in November 2015 three existing culturally responsive domestic violence men's programs serving Aboriginal communities were supported to enhance their program or service to address the issue of domestic violence in a manner that reflects their respective community needs, while incorporating both culture and traditions.



## 4 | Direct Services for Rural and Remote Communities

In rural/remote communities, there is limited transportation support for women and children to access safe shelter and support services. In April 2015, 56 Transition House (TH) and Safe Home (SH) providers, including seven Aboriginal service providers, were given grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$25,000 to primarily assist Aboriginal women and children to access safe shelter and support services. This includes arranging taxis, purchasing bus tickets, staff transporting women to the TH or SH program, and providing transportation and accompaniment to community services such as lawyer appointments. This can even include chartering boats, which happens in some of the Island programs.

This funding was also used to enhance direct service delivery by SH and TH programs that are operated by Aboriginal organizations that work with women and children affected by domestic violence. These include crisis/emotional support, safety planning, and information and referrals to other community services, including financial, medical and legal assistance, transportation and accompaniment, safe shelter, food and basic hygiene supplies.

The Homeless Prevention Program (HPP), introduced in 2014, aims to provide portable rent supplements to people at risk of homelessness. These supplements help people to access rental housing in the private market. Women who have experienced violence, or are at risk of violence, are one of the groups identified for the program. In rural/remote communities, between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, more than 900 Homeless Prevention Program rent supplement recipients identified as women fleeing violence.

### WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO

**\$1.5 MILLION**  
*investment to support victims in rural and remote communities who have limited access to transportation and social housing options. This program will be similar to other BC Housing programs (Homeless Outreach, Rental Assistance Program) and will target communities that have no social housing. Transportation will involve supporting women to get to necessary services, such as income assistance, court services or counselling. Other situations involve transporting women with and without children to the safety of a transition house over long distances. Funds to support transportation will be managed through Safe Home Programs. This investment primarily supports direct services to women with or without children.*

#### STAFF MEMBER – *Tamitik Status of Women's Transition House*

*"Funds distributed under the BC Housing initiative were focused on assisting with the transportation needs of Aboriginal women and children fleeing violence. These funds have made a significant difference to the practical ways in which Transition and Second Stage Houses and Safe Homes have been able to provide support. For example, in Kitimat, Tamitik Status of Women's Transition House staff found the funding invaluable in helping women find safety through relocation to other communities, allowing them to cover the costs of travel and moving expenses. The importance of being able to take meaningful possessions with them cannot be underestimated. The funds were also used to purchase bus passes that enabled women to travel to appointments with a range of supports and service providers."*

# RESPONSE AREAS: CONTINUED EFFORTS

All actions and public commitments made in Year One were met or exceeded. Several actions initiated in Year One continued in Year Two to help strengthen the systemic response to domestic violence, and several new initiatives are also included to highlight the ongoing efforts of government and anti-violence partners. For complete details of the commitments in Year One please refer to the *First Annual Report*.

## 1 | Public Awareness and Prevention

### HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE DID

- » PODV and government partners promoted and leveraged existing anti-violence campaigns and provincial websites that increase public awareness about preventing and ending domestic violence.
- » *#SaySomething Campaign* – In March 2015, government launched a digital public awareness campaign to focus attention on the serious issue of domestic violence. The campaign uses social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to offer practical advice and tips to encourage everyone, especially bystanders, to speak up and learn safe ways to help end the silence on domestic violence (see pictures below for examples). Information is available in Punjabi, Mandarin, Cantonese and English. Envisioned as a multi-year project, government expanded the campaign in March 2016 to focus attention on the issue of sexual violence. The corresponding campaign website provides information and resources under three main categories:





"I need help," "Where to get help," and "I want to help," and includes animated videos, images and tweets. During the week of the sexual violence campaign (March 22-31st) over 520,000 Facebook users were reached, and the campaign website had over 9,000 visits.

- » *VictimLink BC Campaign* – To raise awareness about VictimLink BC (a toll-free, confidential, 24/7 help and information line), government placed advertisements in rural B.C. newspapers, on Facebook and Google, and ran radio public service announcements. There were 8,176 visits to the VictimLink BC website during the week of the 2014 spring campaign, more than 14 times the number of visits over the previous week, and more than 19 times the weekly average of visits since May 2012. VictimLink BC provides service in more than 110 languages, including 17 North American Aboriginal languages. In 2015/16, 13,894 British Columbians were helped by VictimLink BC.
- » The VictimLink BC awareness campaign supports recent initiatives to provide multi-lingual information related to domestic violence to diverse populations. For example, government has translated several publications into Chinese, Punjabi and French, including the *For Your Protection: Peace Bonds and Family Law Protection Orders* pamphlet, as well as *Help Starts Here*, a series of resources for victims of crime.
- » Government recently updated the Victim Impact Statement Form and Guide and translated it into nine additional languages: Chinese, Filipino, French, Hindi, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese. A victim impact statement is a written account of how a crime has affected a victim. While it is not mandatory to fill out, when completed, judges can use it to consider how to sentence a person convicted of a crime.

- » Government continues to support the *Roots and Seeds of Empathy* (ROE) prevention program in early childhood settings and kindergarten classrooms. During school 2015/16, 411 ROE programs were delivered, reaching 10,275 children. Of these, 55 SOE programs were delivered in preschool settings, including 22 in Aboriginal communities, reaching approximately 900 children.

**SHAWN GORE, BC LION –  
Be More Than a Bystander Facilitator**

*"I believe that the Be More than a Bystander program has opened the eyes of thousands to the verbal, emotional, and often physical and sexual abuse that our society accepts. We allow abuse to take place because we do not actively help to stop it, violence against women is real and us good people need to speak up to end it. I have a mother, wife, and two daughters. I would love for them to live in a world where they are not at a higher risk to be verbally, physically, or sexually abused because of their gender. So the Ending Violence Association of BC, PODV, the BC Lions and I are speaking up to help create a more respectful culture in our communities."*

- » *Be More than a Bystander Campaign* – Our government is very proud to be a part of the Be More Than a Bystander initiative and appreciates the strong partnership between the Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) and the BC Lions Football Club. This campaign supports BC Lions players going into schools throughout the province to educate students about speaking up and breaking the silence surrounding violence against women and girls. In the 2015/16 school year, the campaign reached close to 15,000 youth through more than 20 visits to schools throughout B.C. The B.C. government has provided approximately \$1.08 million for this award-winning initiative, which has reached over 68,000 B.C. youths since 2011.

- » *Moose Hide Campaign* – This campaign, hosted by the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, aims to engage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men to stand up and speak out about the violence committed against women and children. The Moose Hide Campaign raises awareness about an issue that impacts many Aboriginal communities, yet most communities do not have the tools and resources to address the issues that they face. This year, the Moose Hide Campaign was able to provide tools to communities to hold their own community gatherings, show their commitment by distributing and wearing the Moose Hide pins, and learn how to speak up against violence against Aboriginal women and children in their respective communities. In 2015/2016, more than 185,000 Moose Hide pins were distributed across the country, showing an overwhelming increase in participation and interest in the campaign.
- » *The Healthy Aboriginal Network* (HAN) received government funding to develop a comic book targeted at Aboriginal girls aged 10-13, addressing issues of mental health, family and intimate partner violence, sexual abuse and online bullying. The first comic book, titled “Clear Skies,” focused on the topic of family violence and was released in Spring 2015. Two other comics, one addressing child protection and the other targeted at ending violence against women, are currently under development.
- » PODV’s website continues to promote and enhance public education materials and access to information about domestic violence. Additionally, in the last six months the general government website has been enhanced to be more user-friendly. The domestic violence content has received nearly 3,000 views since November 16, 2015.
- » A multi-sector Council to Reduce Elder Abuse (CREA) was established to facilitate the implementation of British Columbia’s *Together to Reduce Elder Abuse – B.C.’s Strategy* (TREA Strategy), launched in 2013. Through partnerships, TREA addresses elder abuse, including domestic violence directed at older adults. In 2015, CREA awarded capacity-building grants to 14 organizations, working in partnership to build community awareness, enhance training and improve the systemic response to elder abuse. Projects have involved numerous British Columbians of all ages and from diverse backgrounds working in various roles to recognize, prevent and respond to the abuse of older adults.
- » One of the CREA grant recipients, *West Coast Leaf*, received \$46,000 to provide legal education for both service providers and women themselves to ensure that older women are better resourced to leave abusive relationships.
- » Government increased visibility to the *Seniors Abuse and Information Line* (SAIL) through public awareness initiatives, and increased hours and capacity for the line. SAIL provides a safe place for older adults and those who care about them to talk to someone about situations where they feel they are being abused or mistreated, or to receive information about elder abuse prevention. Between April 2015 and April 2016, SAIL received more than 3,490 calls. SAIL provides language interpretation services in more than 110 languages upon request, including 17 North American Aboriginal languages.

- » Over 31,000 Elder Abuse Information Kits were developed and distributed to hundreds of senior-serving organizations across B.C., including First Nations and Aboriginal communities and ethno-cultural organizations. This year, the Information Kits were updated and an additional 17,500 copies were distributed. They are posted on [www.SeniorsBC.ca](http://www.SeniorsBC.ca) in both brochure and fact sheet format, and are available in English, Chinese, Punjabi and French. New materials about the risk of financial abuse associated with powers of attorney and joint bank accounts were also developed, printed and distributed, and posted to the website.
- » The BC Association of Community Response Networks, which is active in 133 communities around B.C., delivered *It's Not Right! Neighbours, Friends and Families Train-the-Trainer* training to 81 trainees and provided additional training to 572 community members. These workshops address bystander engagement as a tool to increase awareness about, and prevention of, elder abuse.
- » Since 2006, the B.C. Government, along with the United Nations, the World Health Organization and other jurisdictions, proclaimed June 15th as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to raise awareness about this growing global issue, which includes violence against older women.





## 2 | Supports and Services for Survivors

### HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE DID

- » The *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) domestic violence amendments came into effect on June 1, 2014. These amendments, which bring a stronger focus to the seriousness and gravity of domestic violence, clarify when a child is in need of protection. Joint classroom training for the MCFD and DAA staff and anti-violence partners on the amendments to the CFCSA began in Spring 2014 and continue on an ongoing basis. See the Training section for more detail.
- » New domestic violence practice guidelines and a practice directive for child welfare workers have been developed to support them to appropriately respond to child protection cases that include domestic violence. Wallet cards that include domestic violence risk factors have recently been developed to support good practice.
- » All families, including those in remote, rural Aboriginal communities, have access to child protection mediation services. As of April 2016, there were 58 specially qualified mediators on the Child Protection Mediation Program (CPMP) roster, 19 of whom self-identify as Aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit or Métis). The CPMP completed more than 1,200 mediations during 2015/16 fiscal year. Over the past two years, great emphasis has been placed on applying a domestic violence lens in all cases. There continues to be ongoing work within the context of child protection mediation to strengthen education and practise as they relate to domestic violence.




- » The Ministry of Justice is working to implement recommendations resulting from a review of the *Family Law Act* (FLA) protection orders based on interviews with justice system stakeholders. Court rules have been amended to reduce delays in preparing and filing protection orders, and to ensure the terms are clear and easier to enforce. An initiative is also underway to ensure protection orders are served on respondents who are not present in court when the order is made. The initiative will improve safety and facilitate successful prosecution if the protection order is breached.
- » The *Homeless Prevention Program* (HPP), introduced in 2014, aims to provide portable rent supplements to people at risk of homelessness. These supplements help people to access rental housing in the private market. Women who have experienced violence, or are at risk of violence, are one of the groups identified for the program. For the period April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016, nearly 1,930 of the more than 5,460 HPP rent supplement recipients throughout the province were identified as women fleeing violence.
- » In November 2015, government announced amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) that will come into force when accompanying regulations are complete. The amended RTA will allow a tenant who is fleeing family violence or who has been accepted into a long-term care facility to end their fixed-term tenancy early.
- » The BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH) has developed promising practices to better serve Aboriginal women and children who access transition houses and support programs. A training framework has been completed and is being piloted in five communities: Courtenay, Hope, Mission, Kamloops and Lytton.
- » In 2016, the Multi-lingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC) announced “A Grassroots Project to Promote Gender Equality within Visible Minority Communities in Vancouver.” PODV will be participating and supporting this valuable project in collaboration with MOSAIC and other government and community agencies. This is a 3-year project that received funding from Status of Women Canada. The objective of the project is to promote gender equality with an ultimate goal of reducing violence against women. Project activities involve bringing women and girls in visible minority communities together over eight working sessions to develop strategies that will help promote gender equality. Strategies for involving men and boys will be implemented to increase inclusivity and support from the entire community.

#### EYOB G. NAIZGHI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – MOSAIC

*“MOSAIC was delighted to lead this two-year collaborative project in partnership with EVA BC on a very sensitive community issue, forced marriages. In essence the funding from the Department of Justice was meant to enhance community capacity to meaningfully respond to and prevent forced marriage. PODV provided key support on the project steering committee through engaging stakeholders and furthering the project’s objectives, which were to increase the capacity of frontline service providers to recognize signs of forced marriage, provide a framework for response and to increase the awareness. The project developed impactful tools and materials such as posters, brochures, a website, pilot training and a risk assessment framework that can be used by the community as an asset. MOSAIC continues to work with PODV on other projects and looks forward to collaborating and sharing information to eliminate domestic violence.”*

- » In collaboration with MOSAIC, EVA BC and other community partners, government supported an initiative that worked on enhancing community capacity to respond to and prevent forced marriages. A risk assessment framework and *awareness materials* were developed to assist service providers in dealing with cases of forced marriage, facilitate open discussion with different stakeholders, including men and women, and raise awareness about the issue in B.C.
- » In the Employment Program of BC (EPBC), services to survivors of violence include outreach services, provision of services to closed groups and workshops addressing the varied and specific needs of survivors of violence. These service delivery approaches ensure that EPBC services are relevant and responsive to the needs of survivors of violence. We continue to focus on ensuring services – including Recognizing, Overcoming and Understanding the Impact of Abuse; Personal Counselling for Employment Readiness; and Job Development and Customized Employment Development – are available to those who need them. EPBC services are delivered through 84 WorkBC Employment Services Centres located across the province, which offer client-centred, integrated services and supports that are responsive, inclusive and accessible. As part of stakeholder engagement, government staff regularly participate in outreach activities with local service providers, such as a Vancouver-based anti-human trafficking program that provides a wide range of services to survivors. This type of outreach ensures that WorkBC is accessible to survivors of violence.
- » Emergency Department Care and Support of Sexual Assault Patients: Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) – A provincial working group has collected information in order to promote consistency in patient-centered medical care (medical and emotional) and standardize the collection of evidence after sexual assaults in B.C. The group is developing recommendations to ensure that victims of sexual violence have reasonable access to optimal and consistent evidence-based treatment.
- » Alcohol consumption is a major contributor to domestic violence. In partnership with BC Healthy Communities and the Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CARBC), government provided \$300,000 to local governments and First Nations to develop and promote municipal alcohol policies (MAP). A process evaluation of the MAP development and implementation was completed in January 2016 and will be used to adjust the program and encourage the successful implementation of future MAPs.
- » In partnership with CARBC, government worked to increase the uptake of best practice guidelines and policies regarding mental health and risky and hazardous alcohol use on 18 B.C. post-secondary campuses. Additionally, the topic of sexual violence was thoroughly explored at the 2016 Healthy Minds, Healthy Campuses Summit.

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- » B.C.'s five regional health authorities have implemented the *Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) Program*, which provides young, low-income, first-time moms with knowledge and support throughout their pregnancy, continuing until their children reach two years of age. Nurses receive specialized education to recognize and respond to domestic violence. All clients are offered a universal safety assessment and a tailored intervention if intimate partner violence is disclosed. Researchers at Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, the University of British Columbia and McMaster University are conducting a scientific evaluation to determine how effectively the US-developed Nurse-Family Partnership program works in B.C.
  - » As of the end of March 2016, 937 first-time young mothers have enrolled in the evaluation of NFP. 667 are currently enrolled, and 270 are being followed to assess their engagement in existing services. In total, 116 young women and their children have graduated from the program. There are 71 NFP nurses, including 10 supervisors, working with women across B.C.
  - » Renewal of the Provincial Women's Health Strategy is underway, which will include a component on the impacts of violence against women and girls. Between October and December 2015, government engaged in consultations with clinical, community, government and research professionals from across the province to inform the renewal of the Strategy.

#### **NURSE – Nurse Family Partnership Program**

*"Our relationship that deepened in the NFP program and my ability as a nurse to "walk along side" led to a disclosure of IPV. This has powerfully impacted her life and the life of her child. I appreciate the education I have received in the NFP program and the opportunity to practice nursing in this very privileged and impactful way to support vulnerable clients. Since her disclosure two weeks ago, Sarah has received support and assistance from the police, victim services, legal aid, legal counselling, a women's resource centre and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Today, Sarah and her child are safe in a transition house. The relationship, trust and security we had developed together over frequent home visits gave Sarah courage to disclose. The IPV education I received as a public health nurse enabled me to skillfully and confidently assess and support her."*

DAVE ATTFIELD –  
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT  
*Royal Canadian Mounted  
Police*

*“The B.C. RCMP acknowledges our partnership with PODV in building a more integrated approach to the complex issues surrounding domestic violence. Reducing domestic violence in collaboration with our partners is a key objective of the Commanding Officer’s Performance Plan for 2015-17. The work of PODV has enabled us to better target measures to combat domestic violence so they address the needs of the communities we serve across the Province from the small, isolated posts of the North to large urban detachments such as Surrey. PODV’s leadership in the cross-ministry working group has enhanced engagement and coordination toward achieving the objectives of the three-year Provincial Domestic Violence Plan. Among the most significant developments has been the work MCFD has done to increase the presence of child protection workers within integrated domestic violence units. This recognizes that domestic violence is more than simply violence between intimate partners; it impacts the well-being of children in profound ways.”*

## 3 | Justice System Response

### HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE DID

- » Government undertook an extensive research process and developed a *Specialized Court Strategy*. This provincial strategy establishes a structured approach for current and future specialized courts that is rooted in validated research, is fiscally responsible, and engages the judiciary, justice system partners and other interested parties.
- » Government is improving access to justice through enhanced early legal advice, and coaching in self-representation and out-of-court resolution services. Starting in 2014/15, the Legal Services Society (LSS) received \$2 million per year for three years to support five pilot projects aimed at enhancing legal aid services in order to improve access to justice in family, criminal and child-protection law matters. This brings the government’s total legal aid commitment to \$74.7 million in 2016/17. The pilots, located throughout the lower mainland – for example, the Parents’ Legal Centre (PLC) at Robson Square, Vancouver – were developed collaboratively with LSS, government and other justice sector partners, including Mediate B.C. Three pilots relate to family law, one to child protection and one to criminal law. Evaluations of these pilot sites are set to be completed by summer 2016. Early results, pending final evaluations, are promising. For example, the PLC has managed about 100 cases in the past year, many of which would not have qualified for standard legal aid services. For the Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel model at the Port Coquitlam courthouse, preliminary data shows a significant reduction in the time to resolution (including a reduced number of court appearances) than the standard model, potentially saving time and resources for courts and clients.
- » The B.C. government provides dispute resolution services to families undergoing separation and divorce through family justice counsellors (FJs) at 21 Family Justice Centres and three Justice Access Centres. Section 10 of the *Family Law Act* provides authority for FJs to offer assistance to clients when violence is identified as an issue or there are safety concerns. Assessing clients for domestic violence and power imbalance in relationships is a critical component of their dispute resolution services.



- » B.C. government representatives, along with officials from the Department of Justice Canada, were part of a Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) ad-hoc working group that was tasked with developing a report looking at issues and challenges (as well as promising practices) related to the intersections of the family and criminal justice systems. The resulting report was: *Making the Links in Family Violence Cases: Collaboration among the Family, Child Protection and Criminal Justice Systems*. In late 2015, B.C. used the report to inform the Fifth Justice Summit.
- » B.C.'s Fifth Justice Summit – Justice Summits are held at least once a year to encourage innovation and facilitate collaboration across the justice and public safety sector. The November 6-7, 2015 summit, which brought together 60 leaders and subject matter experts,

focused on specific ways that the justice system might better respond to victims of violence following a traumatic event, along with steps to improve information sharing and coordination across multiple court proceedings, including family, domestic violence and child protection proceedings.

- » In February 2016, The *Fifth Justice Summit Report of Proceedings* was released publicly and includes eight recommendations for action in the justice and public safety sector that government will continue to address. The recommendations concern the adoption of trauma-informed practices, the development of associated justice-specific training, and working to enable more effective information sharing concerning domestic violence, family law and child protection matters.



## 4 | Coordination, Information Sharing and Referral

### HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE DID

- » For a number of years, community organizations and the B.C. government have been involved in the development of violence against women coordination initiatives. In 2015/16, Community Coordination for Women's Safety (CCWS) continued its work with communities to develop local coordination initiatives, including VAWIR/ Domestic Violence committees and *Interagency Case Assessment Teams* (ICATs), to respond to highest risk domestic violence cases.
- » In 2016, CCWS worked with communities to build capacity at the local level and to develop, enhance and sustain effective models of coordination on violence against women, with a focus on rural and isolated communities, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities and immigrant and refugee women. CCWS also organized and delivered regional capacity-building sessions to enhance regional community coordination networks and support the dissemination of best practices, including models and protocols.
- » ICATs are made up of a team of front-line responders that come together, as and when required, to share information, identify risks and create victim safety and offender management plans for specific highest risk domestic violence cases. ICATs often include a representative from police, MCFD child protection, community-based victim services, police-based victim services, community corrections, health, Aboriginal service providers and other agencies that respond to domestic violence.
- » As of March 31, 2016, there are 40 active ICATs in communities across B.C., up from 24 this time last year. The government provides funding to support CCWS in working with these ICATs as they develop. The map below highlights the communities with active ICATs.
- » In June 2015, an ICAT Best Practices Manual was developed, with the overall intent to increase victim safety in domestic violence and encourage consistent ICAT practices in different parts of the province. Funded through a civil forfeiture grant, the RCMP's Family Violence Intervention Fund and the MCFD, the Best Practices manual is the result of collaboration with members of the criminal justice, child protection and community-based anti-violence sectors. This manual is being utilized by communities trained in the ICAT model.



#### TRACY PORTEOUS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – *Ending Violence Association of B.C. (EVABC)*

*"It has been an honour to continue to work with the Province Office of Domestic Violence again this year. With the Minister's visionary support, the Ending Violence Association of BC has been able to lead two ground-breaking, safety increasing, societal change programs. Our Be More Than A Bystander; Break the Silence on Violence Against Women partnership with the BC Lions has now reached over 80,000 youth, in person in B.C. high schools; teaching youth how to speak up when they see abuse and violence being perpetrated against women and girls. EVA BC is also leading the development of Inter Agency Case Assessment Teams (ICATs). These teams, (now over 40 strong) are working collaboratively across B.C. and across sectors keeping women and children safe from high-risk domestic violence."*



- » On November 24, 2015, the First Nations Health Authority and B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure partnered to host a transportation symposium that heard from First Nations communities and municipalities along the Prince Rupert to Prince George Highway 16 corridor. The discussions focused on finding transportation options to address both medical and non-medical travel and support healthy communities. Discussions took into account previous community engagement and reports, including the *2006 Highway of Tears Symposium Report* and the 2012 Missing Women Commission of Inquiry recommendations.
- » As a result of this symposium, in December 2015 the B.C. government announced and committed to a new \$3 million plan to improve access to transportation services along the Highway 16 corridor and enable residents of First Nations communities and municipalities to travel safely from Prince Rupert to Prince

George. The plan includes five actions: a new BC Transit service and/or expansion of existing service; a community vehicle grant program for communities to purchase and operate their own transportation service; a First Nations driver education program; highway infrastructure safety improvements including improved webcam technology, more webcams and new transit shelters; and collaboration and coordination between existing transportation providers to increase interconnectivity of services. In addition, the ministry appointed a twelve-person Highway 16 Transportation Advisory Group to provide input into the implementation of the action plan and ensure that the actions addressed the feedback received at the November 2015 transportation symposium. The Advisory Group met five times between January and May 2016. In June 2016, Transportation Minister Todd Stone announced an additional \$2 million in federal





and provincial funding that was obtained to further support the action plan.

- » Safe Relationships, Safe Children (SRSC) aims to strengthen health-care and child-service systems by identifying risks and responding to the needs of children and families affected by parental mental health challenges, problematic substance use and/or intimate partner violence. The three-phased initiative began in 2012 and is nearing completion of its second phase, which included implementation in 20 sites across the province. Province-wide implementation will be phased in beginning in Fall 2016. Consultation with government, health authority and community partners, First Nations and Aboriginal individuals, as well as the First Nations Health Authority and other relevant Aboriginal stakeholders including DAAs, has occurred and will continue as the project moves forward. Various resources have been developed to support the implementation, including a Guide to Enhance Practice (for service providers) and a Community Implementation Toolkit (to support community planning), as well as an online community of practice. Online training modules are being developed for service providers as well.
- » The Protection Order Registry (POR) is a confidential database containing all civil and criminal protection orders issued in B.C. The goal of the POR is to contribute to the reduction of violence against women, vulnerable adults, youth and children by supporting the enforcement of civil and criminal protection orders. In 2014, an electronic access agreement was signed, allowing government partners to provide select MCFD staff with access to protection orders from the POR. This will help staff who are conducting child protection risk assessments and developing safety plans. To date, three training sessions have been conducted (in late Spring 2015) and accompanying practice directives have been distributed to child welfare workers.
- » In December 2014, government updated the Persons Fleeing Abuse Policy to clarify that women fleeing abuse and residing in a transition home are eligible to request a moving supplement. From April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016, there were 5,934 Fleeing Abuse applications for assistance. Government employees in locations around the province provide the primary contact in each geographic area to assist with complex and sensitive cases involving individuals fleeing abuse.
- » The Province continues to work with the federal government and settlement and anti-violence agencies to address the issue of sponsorship debt. Sponsorship debt, or the threat of sponsorship debt, may impact the safety of abused immigrant and refugee women and their children by deterring women from leaving an abusive spouse, and may affect their ability to gain financial independence.

DR. BALBIR KAUR GURM,  
NURSING FACULTY –  
Kwantlen Polytechnic  
University (KPU) and  
Facilitator – Network  
to Eliminate Violence  
in Relationships (NEVR)

*“KPU nursing students have the privilege to work with NEVR and members of PODV on real world projects to help improve the health of the community and preventing violence in relationships. NEVR is a cross-sectoral committee of over 50 organizations that has held yearly conferences, One Billion Rising Events and created toolkits. In June 2016 a new community champions toolkit was developed to prevent domestic violence that was led by KPU, PODV and DIVERSEcity. This toolkit is for the public on how to recognize abuse, intervene safely and help those who have suffered abuse access resources. These types of partnerships leverage resources, increase collaboration, and make changes to improve communities where some organizations could not have developed these projects on their own. Partnerships are really about creating synergy, so that it is a win/win for communities and partners.”*

## 5 | Research, Training and Evaluation

### HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE DID

#### RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:

The B.C. government supports and promotes partnerships with academic institutions to share their latest research and help promote evidence-based policies and best practices to strengthen the provincial response to domestic violence.

- » PODV has established a number of partnerships with various academic institutions, including the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the University of the Fraser Valley, and Western University. This has been done through student placements, research projects and speaking engagements.
- » The focus of some of this year's projects with students includes the development of toolkits for bartenders, salon professionals and community champions, as well as research with service providers in B.C. to identify emerging best practices and gaps in services for women with disabilities who are affected by domestic violence.
- » Along with other local, provincial and national partners, PODV is supporting *The Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations* (CDHPVP), led by world-renowned domestic violence researchers, Dr. Peter Jaffee and Dr. Mirna Dawson. In particular, the project is focused on identifying emerging strategies for risk assessment, risk management and safety planning. A major part of this work emphasizes the unique needs of vulnerable populations, including Aboriginal, immigrant and refugee, rural, remote and northern communities, and children living with domestic violence. The work is funded by a five-year Social Science and Humanities Research Grant (2015-2020). The project [website](#) includes resources and initiatives from all provinces and territories, as well as news, events and learning opportunities.
- » PODV, in partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University, has developed a framework that will support the continued evaluation of the plan's progress.

#### INDIGENOUS TRAINING:

- » The Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) continue to implement enhanced cultural safety and humility programming for staff. As of April 2016, over 16,775 participants have completed the core *San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training* (ICS).
- » To date, over 500 frontline victim support workers and related staff completed the *San'yas* ICS training.
- » Since October 2013, 325 MCFD staff have completed the *San'yas* ICS training and an additional 353 completed the *San'yas* ICS core mental health training. Furthermore, 1,040 completed the "*Building Bridges through Understanding of the Village*" training.
- » To support the development of cultural competency in the B.C. Public Service, public servants are encouraged to take the "*Building Capacity in Aboriginal Relations – We're All Here to Stay*" interactive e-learning training. This course helps increase awareness of the histories, cultures and world views

of Aboriginal people in B.C. The course addresses the influence of Aboriginal cultures in the province, the diversity and demographics of Aboriginal peoples, and some of the challenges and opportunities that Aboriginal peoples in the province face today. Close to 400 public servants in various ministries have completed this training.

- » Work is underway on the development of justice-specific modules within the ICS training course. The purpose of the training is to support culturally responsive and sensitive services for staff working in various areas of the justice system, including police, courts, corrections, and Crown Counsel.

#### TRAINING:

- » On December 9-10, 2015, close to 900 multi-sector professionals from around the province gathered in Vancouver to participate in a joint training forum, *TOGETHER! BC Collaborates to Stop Sexual and Domestic Violence*. PODV collaborated with community anti-violence and government partners to plan, deliver and evaluate this two day cross-sector training and information-sharing conference.



- » The conference increased professional knowledge and capacity of frontline responders, enhanced their skills to respond collaboratively to sexual and domestic violence and identified emerging issues and best practices.
- » Evaluation of the conference (283 respondents) indicated that 90% of participants felt that the event was reflective of the needs of their sector, and 85% felt that the presentations and workshops sufficiently met their needs.

Various ministries worked together to create and enhance training programs that support a coordinated response to domestic violence across systems and sectors, including police, family mediators, child protection staff and health care professionals. Since 2009, close to 40,000 school personnel, police officers, child protection workers, child protection mediators, employment and income assistance workers, victim support workers and other community partners have received varying levels of domestic violence training. Some of these achievements include:

- » Since 2014, the *Family Law Act* requires mandatory training for family dispute resolution professionals to include how to identify, screen for, and manage family violence or power imbalances to determine if a consensual dispute resolution process is appropriate, and what type of process should be pursued. The Justice Institute of BC, the Continuing Legal Education Society and other partner organizations provided family law practitioners with training on the Family Law Act. In 2015/16, the Family Justice Services Division had more than 21,000 client contacts where relevant assessments were completed during the process of delivering services.

- » Government provides online *Domestic Violence: Safety Planning Training* to support workers in victim services, violence against women and transition house programs. The training includes a safety planning resource guide that has a specific section on women with disabilities. To date, 2,093 staff have completed this training.
- » To date, 1,177 front-line staff at the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation have completed the online *Domestic Violence: Safety Planning Training*. This training is provided on an ongoing basis to new hires and other staff.
- » To date, 875 transition house, safe home, second stage, emergency shelter and outreach workers have registered for the online Domestic Violence: Safety Planning Training.
- » As of January 2016, 2,285 MCFD and DAA staff have completed the online *Domestic Violence Safety Planning* training, 1,505 received face-to-face training on *Best Practice Approaches – Child Protection and Violence Against Women*, and over 390 participated in joint training on the amendments to the CFCSA. 387 anti-violence sector staff also attended.
- » Government completed the implementation of a two-phased online domestic violence training course for all police in B.C. Starting in 2009, police officers in B.C. completed the *Evidence-based, Risk-focused Domestic Violence Investigations for BC Police (DV 1)* course, followed by a second course, *Assessing Risk and Safety Planning in DV Investigations (DV2)*. The two courses are considered required learning for front-line police and supervisors. Respective agencies will ensure training is provided to new hires and to other members as needed.
- » As of January 2016, 2,784 paramedics have completed the online Domestic Violence Course.



- » All 71 Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) nurses, including 10 supervisors and one provincial coordinator, have taken intimate partner violence education. Trauma-informed practice education has been incorporated into core education for NFP nurses as well. In 2013, government developed *Trauma Informed Practice Guidelines* for health service providers and distributed 4,000 copies across the province. A whole systems approach to trauma-informed practice (TIP) knowledge exchange has been implemented to enhance workforce capacity and evidence-informed practice change at the individual, organizational and system levels across the continuum of mental health and substance use services and across sectors. Notably, a broad knowledge exchange infrastructure supported the implementation of TIP, including provincial and regional workshops and forums, communities of practice and networks, provincial webinars, resources to build and support awareness of TIP principles, and targeted strategies to support practice change at the regional level.
- » The Ministry of Health, in partnership with Perinatal Services BC (an agency of Provincial Health Services Authority) and health authorities, developed the *Provincial Populations and Public Health Prenatal Care Pathway*. This tool for public health nurses and other providers who work with prenatal women includes a component on relationship safety, as well as guidance for assessment, intervention, follow-up and referral for women at risk of experiencing violence in relationships.
- » B.C.'s *ERASE Strategy* (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) includes a five-year, multi-level training program for educators and community partners to help them proactively identify and address bullying and undertake threat assessments. As part of the training, educators learn how to identify signs of mental health and domestic violence issues,

including safe relationships, cross-cultural awareness and systemic racism. More than 14,000 educators have been trained since 2012, including community partners, public school, independent school and First Nations educators and community partners.

- » In 2015/16, CCWS trained 44 communities in 21 training events. Communities trained from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 include: Agassiz, Hope, Boston Bar (UFVR and Fraser/Cascades), Clearwater, Bella Coola, Duncan, Trail, Nelson, Castlegar, Golden, Whistler, Pemberton, Squamish, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Sechelt, Gibsons, Nass Valley, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Ashcroft, Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Cranbrook, Creston, Fernie, Kimberly, Sparwood, Ktunaxa First Nation, Kelowna, Powell River, Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Masset, Surrey, Delta, Penticton, Kamloops, Prince George, Williams Lake, Terrace, Quesnel, Fort St. James, Fort St. John, Takla First Nation and Takla Landing, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Chetwynd, Hudson's Hope and Tumbler Ridge.
- » In 2015, Disability Alliance BC (DABC) received funding from the B.C. civil forfeiture funds to redesign and deliver the *Right to be Safe* full-day training on women with disabilities experiencing violence to service providers in the violence prevention and response sectors. In 2015-16, DABC trained over 80 service providers representing 11 communities throughout B.C.
- » A corresponding resource booklet, *Right to be Safe*, offers service providers in the violence prevention and response sector with information on statistics about violence against women with disabilities, understanding the barriers people with disabilities face, and communication and interaction tips to support people with a range of disabilities.

# MOVING FORWARD

Domestic violence is a preventable and devastating global issue. Eradicating domestic violence requires a shared vision, sustained commitment and continued collaboration. This type of change does not happen overnight, but we owe it to our children, families and communities to remain engaged in doing our part. As evidenced in this report, significant and meaningful progress has been made in B.C. in the past year, and there is more work to be done.

Moving forward, the PODV will continue to work with cross-ministry and sector partners on our shared commitment to strategies and initiatives that improve the systemic response to domestic violence. Work is underway to deliver on the commitments made for the third and final year of the plan, including an independent evaluation of the first two years.

PODV remains committed to providing strong leadership and supporting cross-ministry and community anti-violence partners to move towards delivering on the vision that all British Columbians are safe in relationships and communities. As part of this effort, PODV will continue to identify and prioritize emerging issues, monitor progress, and help ensure sustained momentum and visibility of the issue of domestic violence in B.C.

In the words of Premier Christy Clark: “Ending violence takes all of us to decide to challenge attitudes and change behaviour to prevent it from happening in the first place. Government has a role, as does every British Columbian.” To find out more about how you can play a role in ending violence in relationships, please visit [www.saysomething.bc.ca](http://www.saysomething.bc.ca)

**#SaySomething**

WWW.SAYSOMETHINGBC.CA

**TAKE ACTION**

*Spread the word through the power of social media*



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