



Noreen Cotton, Executive Director
St. Paul & District Crisis Association

Theme: Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

St. Paul and District Crisis Association includes an emergency shelter (Columbus House of Hope) for women and children impacted by domestic violence in addition to overseeing the Turning Point Treatment program for men and the Family Violence Liaison program which provides support for victims of domestic violence when criminal charges have been laid.

Critical Elements

- The Family Violence Liaison receives referrals from the RCMP, Victim Services, the Crown Prosecutors, the Women's Shelter and other community agencies. Family Violence Liaison is RCMP security cleared and has an office in the RCMP detachment.
- The Family Violence Liaison has access to the FVIR (Family Violence Investigative Report) completed by an RCMP constable. This tool is used to assess risk of re-assault as well as to determine bail. The Family Violence Liaison is able to review the full police report as well as case conference with the responding officer, the watch commander and/or the detachment commander. Information sharing and sharing knowledge and perspective has proven to be valuable and essential when working with victims of domestic violence.
- Family Violence Liaison is the voice of the victim. The Family Violence Liaison prepares a synopsis after interviewing the client to send to the Crown; this synopsis consists of gathering information about the history of the relationship, children, details of the assault, mental health or addiction issues as well as the wishes of the victim for the outcome of the case, information about any future concerns in regards to safety and risk.
- Only 10% of the women that the Family Violence Liaison works with have been in the shelter; 90% of the victims would have not received domestic violence specific support if it was not for this program
- The Family Violence Liaison has extensive knowledge of the risk of femicide or serious harm to victims of domestic violence through her training and experience in implementing the Danger Assessment. This helps support safety planning with the victims.
- The Family Violence Liaison and Victim Services staff work closely; both attend court. Victim Services provide the court orientation while the Family Violence Liaison provides emotional support, safety planning, referrals and preparation of the synopsis for the Crown. The two workers visit the reserves together and do home visits together.
- The Family Violence Liaison has learned how to apply for an EPO and is supporting the RCMP members with EPOs.

The upfront research was essential to the success of the program which involved talking to other shelter directors and other community leaders who had developed similar positions to determine the model that would work best in St Paul.

- It is important to spend time developing relationships with community partners- RCMP, Victim Services, Crown Prosecutors. This is essential to the success of the program.