



Ramona Robins, Crown Prosecutor

Domestic Violence Court and Safe Family Intervention Team (SFIT)

Theme: Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

The Safe Families Intervention Team (SFIT) is a partnership that was formed between the Medicine Hat Police Service and the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society (MHWSS). This newly formed unit is housed in the Medicine Hat Police Service building and consists of one MHPS Constable and two MHWSS outreach workers. The mission of this unit is to provide a collaborative, timely and effective team response in partnership with support agencies to assist families in dealing with incidents of family violence.

Critical Elements

- A designated police officer and outreach workers from the shelter work together to support victims of domestic violence.
- When the perpetrators are charged with the offence that is being considered in Medicine Hat Domestic Violence Court, the victim meets with the SFIT team to understand better what her needs, circumstances and wishes are before the case goes to court.
- Upon referral, an intake process is initiated, inclusive of a comprehensive risk assessment and safety planning, review of the offender's police file as well as consideration of the resources that are available to the victim.
- The SFIT team involvement is particularly valuable as a bridge between the victim and the Crown when the victim is 'scared of the justice system more than she is scared of the perpetrator' and wishes to recant.
- SFIT also connects victims with resources as required (e.g., legal assistance).
- SFIT members represent police, women's shelter, children's services, probation, victims' services.