



Wanda McGinnis, CEO  
*Wheatland Crisis Society*

#### Theme: Cross-sectoral Collaboration

The Wheatland Crisis Society operates a 7 bedroom emergency shelter for women and men impacted by domestic violence (Strathmore shelter). The shelter is the only one providing accommodation for men and their children experiencing domestic violence. The Wheatland Society is a partner with Alberta Justice, and the RCMP in the Family Violence Prevention Project. The Family Violence Prevention Project, a partnership including the RCMP, Alberta Justice and the Wheatland Crisis Society, is a voluntary program that engages both victim and offender in their own safety planning through communication regarding risk factors, contact conditions, resolution proposals and future plans for the relationship. The program also offers support and information about the legal process and collaborates with community agencies to make services accessible.

#### *Critical Elements*

- Social worker from Wheatland Crisis Society acts as a consultant in the investigation of domestic abuse situations. Once charges are laid the social worker meets with the complainant and completes a risk assessment using the FVIR Scale, a relationship history and connects the complainant to resources in the community including the Wheatland Crisis Society outreach program. Often the complainants become involved in some sort of counselling or treatment and are usually amenable to learning new tools which are especially helpful if they end up reconciling with their partners. If partners are in treatment the partners are learning similar information.
- The social worker also meets with the accused and when the accused is in treatment or attending counselling the social worker is able to obtain information about their attendance. The social worker assesses the level of accountability of the accused and gets a sense of how motivated the individual is. There has been a 97% follow through for accused attending treatment and/or counselling.
- The social worker also meets with Child Welfare when necessary to ensure that all parties are hearing the same information.
- The social worker completes a detailed report which is shared with the Crown Prosecutor. Resolutions appear to be more meaningful for both the complainant and the accused. Recidivism is down to 3% in the Strathmore area.
- In cases where charges are not laid but there was some RCMP involvement, the social worker's card is left with the family which has resulted in some calls for support prior to more serious situations.