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Documenting Resources for Victims/Survivors of Violence in Canada
Delta Guelph, November 5-6, 2009

[All events in John McCrae Room unless otherwise noted]

Please join us at a Pre-Workshop Hospitality Suite

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

8 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Heritage Suite

[Room 534, 5th Floor]

Day 1:

Thursday, November 5, 2009

8:00

Breakfast
[Location: Gryphon Room]

9:00

Welcome and Opening Remarks
Chair: Myrna Dawson, University of Guelph
Facilitator: Joan Riggs, Catalyst Research and Communications

9:15

Summary of Federal Activities and Research on Victims of Crime in Canada
Presenters: Pam Arnott, Beth Heinze, Shannon Davis-Ermuth, and Susan McDonald, Department of Justice Canada

10:15

Refreshment Break

10:30

Defining victim/survivor resources
[*Roundtable discussions*]

11:15

Defining victim/survivor resources
[*Full plenary: Report back*]
• Creating a working definition

12:15

Lunch
[Location: Gryphon Room]

1:30

What do we know about victim/survivor resources in Canada?
Findings from 2007/2008 Victim Services Survey
Presenter: Susan McDonald, Department of Justice Canada

2:00

Intersections among vulnerabilities and resources for victims/survivors of violence
Presenter: Holly Johnson, University of Ottawa

Day 1

Thursday, November 5, 2009 [continued]

- 2:30** What don't we know about victim/survivor resources in Canada?
Assessing data needs and research gaps from a community, a government and an academic perspective
[Short panel presentations/discussion]
- 3:00** Refreshment Break
- 3:15** Collecting data on victim/survivor resources
[*Roundtable discussions*]
- What do we have? What do we need? How do we collect it?
- 3:45** Collecting data on victim/survivor resources
[*Full plenary: Report back*]
- Building on current knowledge: Where do we begin?
- 4:30** Close of Day 1 Session
- 5:30** Reception & Dinner
[Location: Flanders Room]
- 7:00** Introduction of keynote speaker:
[Sly Castaldi, Executive Director, Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis]
- Keynote Presentation: "Map of Gaps: The Postcode Lottery of Violence Against Women Services."
Presenter: Dr. Liz Kelly, Metropolitan London University, UK
- 8:30** Hospitality Suite
[Location: Heritage Suite]

Documenting resources for victims/survivors of violence in Canada
Delta Guelph, November 5-6, 2009

[All events in John McCrae Room unless otherwise noted]

- Day 2:** **Friday, November 6, 2009**
- 8:00** Breakfast
[Location: Gryphon Room]
- 8:45** Welcome to Day 2: 'Where Are We' Recap of Day 1
Facilitator: Joan Riggs
- 9:00** Using intimate partner violence as a case study for examining
feasibility of documenting victim/survivor resources in Canada?
Presenter: Myrna Dawson, University of Guelph
- 9:30** The impact of criminal justice policy on the growth of intimate
partner violence resources
Presenters: Michelle Lawrence and Margaret Jackson, Simon
Fraser University
- 10:00** What do we know about intimate partner violence resources?
Findings from 2007/2008 Transition Homes in Canada Fact Sheet
Presenter: Andrea Taylor-Butts, Canadian Centre of Justice
Statistics
- 10:30** Refreshment Break
- 10:45** Defining and collecting data on intimate partner violence
resources: Beginning a case study [*Roundtable discussions*]
- 11:15** Are there challenges/benefits to narrowing our focus to a particular
type of victim/survivor or a particular type of crime?
[*Full plenary: Report back*]
- 12:15** Lunch
[Location: Gryphon Room]
- 1:30** Measuring intimate partner violence resources: Resource
availability, accessibility, utility and other characteristics?
[*Roundtable discussions*]

Day 2:

Friday, November 6, 2009

2:30

Measuring intimate partner violence resources: What are the common measures available that can begin the process?
[*Full plenary: Report back*]

3:30

Refreshment Break

3:45

What now? Where do we go from here?
Myrna Dawson, University of Guelph

4:15

Reflections and Closing Comments
Barb McQuarrie, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children

Members of Workshop Organizing Committee:

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Holly Johnson
Barb McQuarrie
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WORKSHOP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

[Please note: The first day of the workshop will focus more broadly on victims/survivors of violence and the first two questions. The second day will focus in more detail on intimate partner violence as a case study, building on the previous day's discussion with respect to the first two questions, but focusing in more detail on the third question. The sub-questions are provided as examples of potential issues to be covered, but should not be considered exhaustive. Please see attached agenda.]

➤ **QUESTION #1: HOW DO WE DEFINE VICTIM/SURVIVOR RESOURCES?**

Sub-questions:

How do we/should we categorize victim/survivors of crimes/violence?

Do the victim/survivor categories have anything in common with respect to their needs and/or requirements?

Is there a core set of resources that all victims/survivors of violence need?

Are some needs/requirements specific to particular groups of victim/survivors or crimes/violence? If so, what are they?

What resources are available to meet these needs/requirements?

Discussion Goal: To create a working definition for victim/survivor resources.

Some current definitions:

Canada's national victim services survey defines *victim services* as "agencies that provide direct services to primary and secondary victims of crime and that are funded in whole or in part by a ministry responsible for justice matters" (Brzozowski 2008, 33).

Map the Gaps define *violence against women support services* as "a range of support options that enable women to create safety, seek justice, and undo the harms of violence" (Coy et al. 2007, 10).

Research in the United States did not specifically define *domestic violence resources*, but did include in their definition of existing policies and laws pertaining to domestic violence as well as organizations and initiatives that responded to domestic violence (Dugan et al., 1999, 2003).

➤ **QUESTION #2: WHAT ARE OUR DATA GAPS AND NEEDS?**

Sub-questions:

How are we collecting victim/survivor resource information now? Is it an appropriate approach?

What may be some of the (un)intended consequences of how we are collecting data?

What data is currently available on victim resources? What do these data look like?

Who is currently collecting these data and for what purposes?

Are there existing data that provide foundational information that can be built upon?

What are the data gaps that can be addressed by data collection in the future?

From where or whom can data be collected?

Are current data collection initiatives capturing what we want to capture? Are they accessible to those who need them (i.e. community, government, researchers)?

What are the resource issues (e.g. time, personnel) that may pose a challenge to data collection and what are other potential obstacles (e.g. confidentiality issues, privacy issues, geographic or jurisdictional boundaries) that will need to be addressed?

Goal: To begin to build on current knowledge by identifying where to begin and potential priorities

➤ **QUESTION #3: WHAT ARE APPROPRIATE MEASURES?**

Sub-questions:

How should 'resource availability' be measured?

(A simple yes/no as to whether they exist in a particular region or community? What level of commitment in terms of funding and staff available? Hours open?)

How should 'resource accessibility' be measured?

(Average distance traveled by victims? Do victims access services immediately or after being placed on a waiting list? Are victims able to access their language of service, accommodations for those with disability (e.g. hearing, sight, wheelchair access, etc.)?)

How should 'resource utility' be measured?

(Absolute numbers of victims served? Numbers of victims served based on characteristics such as race/ethnicity, age, disability compared to representation in the population? What are services offered and what are used? How well do resources respond to needs of client and needs of community?)

What other important resource characteristics should we be measuring?

Should we consider existing policies and laws pertaining to violent victimization as 'resources' to be measured along with more concrete measures such as the more concrete initiatives that often stem from these policies and laws?

(E.g. With respect to shelters, we know they are available, but we should measure absolute number of beds available? Number of beds available compared to need measured by women who are on waiting list? Should we consider the number of women turned away is an indicator of capacity to meet demand? Types of services it offers? Do they offer outreach and internal services?)

(E.g. With respect to police, a community as a specialized police unit, but what does this mean in terms of size of unit relative to the area they cover, number of officers who work fulltime within the unit? How many civilian employees and volunteers?)

Goal: To identify some common available measures

Project title:

Documenting the growth of resources for victims/survivors of violence in Canada: What are they? Where are they? Who do they serve?

Project summary:

The proposed workshop is to develop a policy position/discussion paper and agenda for action that addresses the need to identify reliable and valid standardized measures that can be used to document the existence and type of victim services in Canada. Despite the growth in victim services in recent decades in most industrialized countries, there has been little effort to systematically document what these services are, where they are, and who they serve? One reason for this is that the category of 'victim services' encompasses such a broad spectrum of resources and initiatives that it is difficult to determine where to begin. This workshop will seek to determine the current state of knowledge about the availability of victim services in this country, identify the various categories of victim services that exist, and discuss appropriate measures for documenting services. Services available to victims of violence and female victims will be a specific focus given that they currently represent the majority of crime victims served in Canada and elsewhere.

Project Description:**Significance and Timeliness of Workshop**

In the past few decades, crime victims have become more aware of their rights and of the services and resources available to them largely due to the women's movement and the victims' rights' movement. With the increase in the number of victims seeking help and no parallel increase in the amount of funding that is required to support these services, it is becoming more of a challenge for service providers to assess victim needs, allocate available resources effectively, and to advocate for additional resources to meet the growing demand. In addition, obtaining sufficient funds to maintain current programs while, at the same time, providing support to victims who had previously not been served continues to be a challenge.

As such, the national Victim Services Survey was an important first step in addressing the dearth of information on such resources in this country (Brzozowski 2007; Kong 2004) and has advanced our knowledge on the availability of victim services beyond that currently existing in other countries. The following four steps will help build upon this work so we can more comprehensively document, examine and understand the role of victim services in Canada and elsewhere: (1) To move beyond the greater emphasis on criminal justice-related resources and services to identify and document other types of resources that are available in the community; (2) To examine the distribution of both community-based and criminal justice-related resources and services across geographic regions; (3) To recognize that service availability is only one element of effective delivery by examining additional service characteristics such as accessibility and utility; and, finally, (4) To examine the association between rates of violence and resource availability, accessibility and utility. The first step is the focus of this workshop and will be achieved through the objectives identified below. The remaining three steps will be included as core elements of the agenda for future research and policy action. The

ultimate goal of the research is to identify underserved areas to determine if they have higher rates of violence. The underlying premise is that more resources should lead to reduced exposure to violence: where resources are high, rates in violence should be low and vice versa. This information will help to better allocate funds and to ensure equal access to justice for victims.

Workshop Objectives:

Overall objective: To synthesize the current state of knowledge about community-based and criminal justice services and resources available to crime victims/survivors to provide a starting point for research that will improve upon current data systems. More consistent and reliable data will, in turn, contribute to more informed public policy decisions about the distribution and allocation of victim services in this country through the identification of underserved areas and vulnerable groups.

Detailed objectives:

- (1) To bring together frontline service providers, community partners, researchers, and policymakers;
- (2) To identify the strengths and limitations of current national and provincial data systems documenting the availability of victim/survivor services and resources;
- (3) To reach a consensus on what we mean when we talk about services and resources;
- (4) To determine the types of resources/services that are important to measure and why;
- (5) To identify the most appropriate measures and samples to capture the existence and type of resources and services including measures of availability, accessibility and utility;
- (6) To explore methods for collecting standardized data on measures at the local, provincial, and national level;
- (7) To lay out a research agenda for multi-level initiatives that will examine the feasibility of documenting the availability, accessibility and utility of resources/services;
- (8) To demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral collaboration among frontline service providers, community members, researchers, and policymakers when addressing research issues that can inform social and public policy.

In summary, the workshop will bring together key stakeholders to discuss conceptual and methodological challenges posed by such a project as well as strategies for overcoming these challenges. The timing of the workshop has been selected to follow the release of the third national Victim Services Survey by the Canadian Centre of Justice Statistics (CCJS) in October 2009. The findings of this release will be presented during the first part of the workshop by representatives from CCJS. They will address the challenges and benefits of administering such a survey. In addition, they will also present findings from the most recent Transition Home Survey and highlight the particular issues involved in this data collection initiative as well. These presentations will serve as the foundation for subsequent discussions that will address a variety of questions, including: what criteria should be used to define resources and/or victims services; how do we distinguish between and measure the availability, accessibility, and use of services; what techniques are available to examine the association between the availability, accessibility,

utility and proximity of services to rates of crime and violence (i.e. the viability of GIS and spatial mapping and how this would determine measures used) and so on. The second part of the workshop will focus on a particular type of victim (discussed below) as a case study to focus discussions. The workshop participants will discuss the larger research agenda, including the potential structure of multi-level initiatives and the identification of other potential partners and/or collaborators who would be integral to such a project.

Intimate partner violence as a case study

Findings from the national Victim Services Survey show that victims of violence represent approximately three-quarters of those victims served and the majority of these are women (Brzozowski 2007). Furthermore, it was also found that the majority of those served by the primarily police- or court-related agencies responding to the survey had experienced some form of domestic abuse. Therefore, the second part of the workshop will focus on the availability of services targeting intimate partner violence as a case study that will allow discussions to focus more concretely on a particular type of victim and the challenges posed even when collecting data on a smaller, subgroup of the victim population. Focusing on this group of victims and the services available to them also makes sense given that resources targeting this population have grown the most rapidly in recent decades.

Contribution to advancing understanding of the victim service issues

The above workshop will lay the groundwork needed to move forward with the remaining three steps identified above – documenting the distribution of services across regions, understanding the role of service availability, accessibility and utility and, finally, examining the links between services and rates of crime and violence. These elements will be included in a larger initiative that will be outlined in the research agenda developed at the workshop.

Given the emphasis in recent decades on improving resources that target crime victims, including victims of domestic and sexual violence, focusing on these resources during the second part of the workshop will provide a crucial case study for the feasibility of examining victim services more generally. As argued by DeLeon-Granados & Wells (2003), we need “a dialogue among key stakeholders, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers on an important and growing research area; a discussion of the ways to improve data systems and to improve the manner in which data are used for social science; and an enhanced awareness of methods to track efficacy of state and federal policy over time (p. 150).” The workshop will begin this dialogue and participants will frame the future agenda, both with respect to research and public policy.

The workshop also begins to address the call for research that identifies what program, policy and/or legislative reforms have provided protection to victims of crime overall and, in particular, violent crime (Campbell et al. 2007). Addressing this gap, the initiative that will grow out of the workshop and related policy position/discussion paper will involve the development of an interdisciplinary group of Canadian community members, researchers, and policymakers who will work: (1) To generate a more extensive program of research on the documentation of services and resources for

victims/survivors of violence in this country over time and space; and, (2) To create a larger alliance of researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders interested in understanding the contribution of community- and criminal justice-based services and resources to the reduction of violence.

Value of Planned Deliverables

Beyond the benefits to participants, the discussion paper and agenda for action evolving out of the workshop will provide a necessary first step for laying the foundation for the development of data systems that will enhance the research capabilities of academics and public policy researchers and build the capacity of community partners and policymakers to make informed decisions about resource distribution and allocation in Canada. The involvement of policymakers and service representatives in the workshop and writing of the final discussion paper will contribute the practical elements necessary to adequately synthesize our current state of knowledge in this area as well as the mechanisms for improving upon this knowledge in the future. Such input is crucial to researchers who need to verify methods and approaches to the study of research issues in the practical environment.

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