camh — Centre for Addiction and Mental Health / Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale	THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION / LA FONDATION TRILLIUM DE L'ONTARIO	Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System	Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children

SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

CHARACTERISTICS OF STAGES OF CHANGE

DEVELOPING AWARENESS STAGE:

Schools developing awareness recognize that bullying and violence in the school are issues that need to be addressed by all stakeholders. School administration and staff understand that students need a safe environment before they can begin to learn. There is recognition that much work needs to be done to address issues of violence in the school community.

 In this stage, the administration and staff will begin to review and assess school policies and procedures to further understand what has already been written and done to improve school safety. Surveys may be completed with students, staff and/or parents to measure student, staff and/or parent understanding of bullying and violence in the school community. In this stage, there is much reading, auditing, inquiring and discussing about the nature of violence in the school and how to improve the school environment. After a thorough investigation of the current situation, questions are raised and an examination into possible next steps in initiated.

PLANNING AND RESPONDING STAGE:

At this stage, a school is using information from the audits or surveys conducted and review of other schools' initiatives to develop protocols and plans on violence prevention. The school is beginning to acquire resources, develop new strategies and implement programs to address the issue of bullying and other forms of violence.

The school engages representatives from all partners (staff, students, parents & community agencies). Committees are formed to establish goals and to assist in the creation of an overall plan for making the school environment safe for all students. Decisions are made to reinforce or modify current protocols and processes and training is put in place to support the plan and encourage the implementation of specific initiatives. Most, if not all, of the partners are committed to the action plan. Results of the various initiatives are measured and modifications made if required. One senses a great deal of hope and energy on the road to the development of sustainable programs.

EDUCATING AND LEADING STAGE:

A school at this stage has consolidated its efforts. Initiatives are enhancements of existing programs and no strategy undertaken as part of the safe school program is dependent on any single or small group of staff but is embedded in the school curriculum and climate.

Staff, students, parents and community partners readily take responsibility for the existence and implementation of a safe school environment. There is recognition that the maintenance of a safe and welcoming environment is an active, ongoing responsibility to review, evaluate and respond to what is happening in the school and to share expertise with others beyond the school. Violence prevention and safe school initiatives are well integrated into all aspects of school life. The school has the capacity to respond effectively to any new issues which arise. Successes are celebrated and new staff, students and parents are mentored as future leaders. At this stage the school is a role model of a dynamic safe school and is willing to share its experiences and expertise.