

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report is the result of interviews and focus groups conducted between August 2003 and September 2004. The purpose of the report is to examine gaps in service, especially as they pertain to the rural area of Middlesex County. I felt it would be important to contextualize the gaps in services in the rural areas of Middlesex County by examining these rural services against the background of those available in London, the urban centre of the county.

I interviewed most members of both the London and the Middlesex County Coordinating Committees to End Woman Abuse. I also interviewed other service providers and professionals whom respondents and my Advisory Committee suggested could be helpful. In total, I conducted sixty-four interviews and five focus groups. Every individual with whom I spoke has contributed something to this report. Individuals who wished to be named in the report and the organizations they represent are included in Appendix 1.

What is presented in the following pages is a snapshot of the movement to end violence against women in London and Middlesex County at a particular point in time. As the report has evolved, I have come to see it as a facilitated discussion between people who work with abused women and their children and/or men who abuse. The experts cited here work in different ways, in different settings, in different sectors and professions. I think that an exchange of perspectives and insights and ideas may be a fruitful way to improve our responses. We are all working for the safety of women and children. Much as I have tried to truly represent the voices of those with whom I spoke, I take final responsibility for the views and perspectives presented here.

Finding a Common Understanding of Woman Abuse

Do we all have the same definition of woman abuse? Do we all use the same theoretical framework for identifying and analyzing the effects of woman abuse? Because the respondents in this study work in such varied settings, it seemed important to find out if there is some common ground that we all stand on as we respond to those with experiences of woman abuse. My first thought was to ask respondents if they have a feminist understanding of woman abuse, but it soon became clear that “feminist” is itself a term that has different meanings for different people. Instead, I asked respondents if they use the Power and Control Wheel as a basis for understanding woman abuse.

The wheel is important because it defines woman abuse as an attempt to have power over and control of a woman. A few respondents, none of whom were members of the Coordinating Committees to End Woman Abuse, were not familiar with it. Most, but not all respondents, acknowledged using the power and control wheel as the basis of their understanding of woman abuse. And finally, there was a set of respondents that use the Power and Control Wheel along with other theoretical frameworks. An important critique did emerge about the Power and Control Wheel, highlighting the fact that it was developed and has been used with little attention to how racism, or for that matter

classism, homophobia, ableism or other forms of oppression intersect with the problem of violence against women.

Some respondents raised the concern that our definition of woman abuse is too narrow. Others spoke of the fragmentation of service that goes along with a narrow conception of woman abuse as intimate partner violence. The fact is that women who find themselves in relationships marked by intimate partner abuse often grew up in a violent home, or were emotionally neglected or sexually abused. For example, one counsellor reported that she is now seeing the daughters of women whom she counselled years earlier. A narrow definition of woman abuse obscures the connectedness of different forms of violence against women and ignores the fact that the roots of the problem may lie in childhood victimization. It also leads to the concentration of resources in efforts to deal with only one piece of an intersecting puzzle. Funding mandates were also mentioned as a factor making it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to respond holistically to violence against women.

Contextual Societal Challenges

There was a strong perception amongst respondents that we are dealing with an increasingly complex set of problems. Few respondents reported dealing with women whose only problem was woman abuse. Generally, there was a consensus that when woman abuse is an isolated problem and women have support and are financially independent, they are more able to leave and to stay out of abusive relationships. The trend described by many, however, is one of people with a range of interrelated problems and, at best, a piecemeal response to those problems.

Social service cuts, and parallel cutbacks in health and education, were identified as a major factor exacerbating these difficulties. Respondents spoke often of the problems posed by poverty and of the increasing marginalization of families who are living below the poverty line, a situation that has unquestionably been worsened by cutbacks. Some felt that epidemic rates of violence against women and an increasing number of child deaths have been fed by poverty. They called attention to the fact that abuse forces women and children to live in poverty, for lifetimes, and sometimes for generations.

Specifically policies governing the way Ontario Works is administered were identified as a grave problem. There were strong feelings that reductions to social assistance have really hurt people. Several respondents spoke of the damaging legacy of the Harris government. They were disturbed by a 'collective yawn' at the condition of the most vulnerable.

People with mental illness have also suffered terribly in these circumstances, and many of them are women. The lack of social supports has resulted in many people with mental illness being jailed. 25-35 percent of the prison population suffers from mental illness, leading Justice Edward Ormston, from the Mental Health Division Court, to remark, "Jail is the only place open to mentally ill people twenty-four hours day. Often the price of homelessness is jail."

Increasingly Complex Lives

There was a large degree of consensus among respondents that the situations they deal with are becoming more complex, and that intervention and resource needs have intensified. For the most part, there was strong agreement that the growing needs and the bigger and bigger crises facing abused women and their children, and sometimes the men who abuse them as well, are related to poverty and cutbacks.

Complex problems are stressful for those trying to address them, as well as for those experiencing them. Respondents frequently reported feeling overwhelmed and ill-equipped to deal with the situations they faced. Implicitly or explicitly, they also named the problem as being larger than any single organization and called attention to the need for a systemic response. These are not problems that will go away or even remain at a consistent level if inaction and inattention is our response. The misery and suffering of women and children will increase and the ensuing societal costs will intensify with each new generation born into hopelessness.

Dealing with problems of woman abuse, addictions and mental health in the criminal justice system is the most costly option of all. The situation demands a great deal more early intervention and prevention efforts.

Layers of Marginalization and Isolation

Isolation is both an effect of violence and a risk factor for experiencing violence. When women are marginalized and isolated for any reason, their risk of victimization increases. Isolation and marginalization occur for a variety of reasons, including language, cultural, racial identity, living in a rural area, poverty, physical or mental health problems, age, addictions, participation in the sex trade or being in conflict with the law. These women can be victimized through interpersonal violence, racism, social exclusion and/or extreme poverty.

Being aware of the multiple ways in which a woman can be marginalized helps us to recognize the structures that create such inequity. The Kitchen Table Project, a study of women in the mental health system that was coordinated locally, tells us that “eighty percent of participants spoke of either childhood abuse and/or violence in current relationships.” Those working in addiction services have noted a similar link. Despite a growing understanding that woman abuse is intricately linked to mental health problems and addictions in the lives of women, none of the sectors are fully prepared to deal with women whose lives are complicated by all of these factors

A study conducted by the Family Consultants of the London Police Force demonstrates that in the absence of appropriate support for people with mental health problems, they are criminalized, overwhelmingly for minor offenses. In light of this, a respondent explains that in closing down hospitals for the mentally ill, “We have trans-institutionalized. We have moved people from hospitals to jails.”

Many women who are homeless also have mental health problems and/or substance abuse problems. Some of them are involved in exchanging sex for food, shelter and

perhaps drugs. We can surmise from the research mentioned above and other similar studies that the vast majority of these women are dealing with past and/or current abuse experiences. Yet most of our services are not able to deal with the complex issues that these women present.

The First Nations women who participated in this study readily acknowledged that violence against women is a serious problem for them. These respondents situated violence against women in the broader context of colonization, a process that has had a devastating impact on First Nations peoples. Author and editor Kim Anderson further explains the link between residential schools and CAS involvement in the lives of First Nations people. First Nations respondents saw the solutions to woman abuse as being contingent upon addressing the gamut of social and health problems that racism and colonization has caused in their communities. And they clearly see real solutions as emerging from their own traditional cultural practices.

Respondents also spoke eloquently about the challenges of abused women who are new to Canada and about the barriers that they confront, both from their own communities and from our services. Although several respondents commented on the challenges in diversifying staff to better reflect the changing demographics of our community, this report does include the voices of racially and ethnically diverse people. Their insights are tremendously important to us and will continue to be as we plan to meet the emerging challenges of our community.

The Interdependence of Women and Children: Working Across Sectors

The fact that children's wellbeing is dependent upon the wellbeing of their parents and, in most cases, upon that of their mothers, is a simple truth that we can all too easily lose sight of in our institutional responses to woman abuse. Many respondents expressed concern that new legislation focusing on the potential harm of children witnessing abuse reinforces a separation between the interests of abused women and their children.

The dramatic increase in the number of children going into CAS care in our community has received a lot of attention recently. A major research study shows that woman abuse, poverty, maternal depression, impaired parenting capacity and intergenerational CAS involvement are major contributing factors to this problem. The Eligibility Spectrum is a decision making tool used by CAS workers that outlines how to assess for risk much more clearly than previously was the case. Nonetheless, some respondents questioned whose interests are served by a focus on risk assessment. They were concerned that risk assessment can be misused, especially by inexperienced workers.

The decision to move from a risk assessment model to a strengths-based model is provincial one, not a local one. Nonetheless, a critical step towards this shift is building a good collaborative working relationship between the child protection sector and the violence against women sector. This community has recognized that and has taken positive steps towards building and sustaining relationships. This can go a long way

towards helping abused women to care for and keep their children, but it cannot make up for the lack of services when they are needed, whether for the children or the mother. In contrast to the ambivalence and outright criticism the new legislation intended to deal with child witnesses of woman abuse has garnered from the VAW sector, the Community Group Treatment program is widely accepted and highly regarded. This model of intervention provides concurrent groups for children who have witnessed abuse and their mothers. This approach allows CAS and VAW workers to work closely together and to learn from each other. They pool resources and both deepen their understanding of woman abuse and child abuse.

While many respondents expressed their appreciation for this program, others did point out its limitations. It is not able to adequately address the needs of severely traumatized children who require individual attention. Because all of the available funding to assist child witnesses was poured into a single initiative, there are no resources to assist those children. This is yet another example of how we cannot design, “one size fits all” programs and expect them to adequately and effectively respond to the needs of an entire community.

The real challenge in the situation is for policy makers. We must find ways to address the roots of the interrelated problems we are seeing; children going into CAS care, woman abuse, poverty, mental health problems and intergenerational involvement with CAS. This means investing more in prevention and early intervention efforts.

Using the Law to Hold Abusers Accountable and Supporting Women through the Criminal Justice System

In Canada historic reforms to improve a criminal justice response to intimate partner abuse have included a number of components: development and implementation of pro-charge and pro-prosecution policies; training programs for criminal justice professionals; support and advocacy for victims; court-mandated programs for batterers; and public education initiatives aimed at conveying the message that family violence is unacceptable.¹ Building on this foundation, Ontario introduced a comprehensive, province-wide Domestic Violence Justice Strategy in response to the May/Illes Inquest and the 1999 recommendations of the Joint Committee on Domestic Violence. On December 13, 2004, The McGuinty Government launched a new Action Plan on Domestic Violence. They describe it as a proactive plan that puts new emphasis on prevention and better community support for abused women and their children.

Although the pro-charging policies have resulted in some unintended negative consequences, the majority of intimate partner abuse victims nonetheless express strong support for the pro-charge policy. An intimate partner abuse victim needs to know that if she calls the police to report an incident of violence, the police will come and will, at a

¹ This discussion of the national context references the *Final Report of the Ad Hoc Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group Reviewing Spousal Abuse Policies and Legislation*, prepared for the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Justice. The full report is available at: <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/fm/reports/spousal.html>

minimum, stop the immediate incident of violence. The pro-charging policy promotes a strong and consistent first line of response by the criminal justice system that contributes to ensuring the safety and security of intimate partner abuse victims.

National research clearly documents some frustrations with the mandatory prosecution policy, by prosecutors, victims and the public alike. Some prosecutors express unhappiness about being expected to prosecute cases absent a cooperative victim/witness. Some victims do not want to support a prosecution against, or to testify against, a partner with whom they have reconciled. Locally, respondents generally recognized the mandatory charging policy as an important historical development that helped enormously to take woman abuse from the realm of the private out into the public. Yet some respondents voiced doubts, noting that it has some downsides as well. National research also shows that some victims are of the view that the criminal justice system still does not treat intimate partner abuse seriously enough, as reflected by the sentences imposed on intimate partner abusers. As well, members of the public often voice opposition to a process or policy that does not uniformly lead to the traditional criminal justice response, namely, incarceration.

Domestic violence courts have been established to permit a focus on the special nature of woman abuse cases by court officials who have an understanding of the dynamics of the problem. Coordination within the justice process and beyond is supported through specially tailored court case management strategies. Systems or protocols have been developed to support New Crown Attorneys. London does not have a dedicated domestic violence courtroom, but rather employs a domestic violence process. There is a domestic violence team of crowns with specialized training. All crowns get specific domestic violence training, but the team has more. This team supervises all prosecution of domestic violence cases.

Abusive partner intervention and treatment programs are offered in most Canadian jurisdictions. All programs offer group counselling, sometimes supplemented by individual counselling and a specialized curriculum, generally based on the dynamics of power and control. In London Changing Ways has the responsibility for delivering group counselling to men who abuse their partners. The agency also has a Women's Contact Coordinator to work with the women whose partners are in the program.

Despite some difficulties, and though empirical studies are few, there is early evidence to suggest that risk assessments used in safety planning for victims of intimate partner violence may provide additional insights, help victims adopt new safety measures or help parties match safety planning to specific dangers. As part of Ontario's Domestic Violence Justice Strategy, police will be collecting data using a Domestic Violence Supplementary Report Form (DVSR), which includes a risk assessment component.

Auditing, monitoring and accountability mechanisms allow jurisdictions to assess the effectiveness of strategies and to ensure compliance. To track the progress of cases through the justice system and to assess the impact of program and process changes on an ongoing basis, a jurisdiction needs an integrated information system. The capacity of jurisdictions to track cases from the point of a call to police through sentence completion

is severely limited, as, for the most part, justice information systems do not link components (police, the Crown and Correctional Services).

There is increasing recognition that a coordinated response is required; one that integrates criminal justice, social service, mental health and community responses. The fact that this goal has been difficult to achieve is not surprising. For one thing, criminal justice institutions are asked to make links to social services agencies in domestic violence cases that they are not asked to make in other types of crimes. Traditionally, the overriding objective of the criminal justice system has been the detection and sanction of perpetrators of crime. Reforms that address empowerment and support of victims have challenged the legal system's culture, processes and priorities. The ambiguity of goals can cause difficulty at the operational level for police and the Crown. Nevertheless there is a solid base of relationships in this community that facilitates communication when tension occurs.

Policing within the geographic area of Middlesex County is a complicated affair. There are several services at work; the London Police Service is responsible for the City of London, the Strathroy-Caradoc Police Service is responsible for the town of Strathroy and Caradoc Township, and the Ontario Provincial Police are responsible for rural areas of Middlesex County.

The First Nations Reserves of Muncey and Chippewa and the settlement of Oneida have their own services. These services are not held accountable under the Police Service Act or the Adequacy Standards.

Inevitably there are inconsistencies in the organization of responses to woman abuse, in philosophies about woman abuse and in the experiences of both police and community members.

Clearly, London has been a leader in formulating and implementing effective criminal justice responses to woman abuse. This leadership has been widely recognized. But the intense learning process of the London Police Service has not been paralleled in the other services that work throughout Middlesex County. Cultural practices that discourage reporting are one reason why women may not report abuse. Fragmented policing with varying standards and accountability is another.

Still, several officers from smaller police services outside of London noted that there may be a definite advantage for women who report to them because the same officer will be able to follow their case through to resolution. As a result, they will get more individualized attention and have better access to immediate information about what is going on in their case.

No provisions for transportation for those living outside of the city have been built into the specialized domestic violence process and the Victim Witness Assistance Program, and this means that many men and women face significant challenges when they need to access them.

The result of this uneven development is, not surprisingly, an uneven response to woman abuse throughout Middlesex County.

Negotiating Custody And Access, Child Support Payments and Property Settlements

While much attention has been paid to the criminal response to woman abuse since the 1980s, the family law system and the potential pitfalls it holds for abused women have been largely ignored. The provision of legal aid for women leaving abusive relationships is at best inadequate. This lack of adequate legal aid funding in the family law system has had devastating repercussions for women needing legal assistance. This grossly inadequate legal support for abused women must be considered against the backdrop of an increasingly well organized father's rights movement determined to undermine women's legal rights.

London is home to two programs that assist people to deal with the family law system. In 1998, a local lawyer who had represented primarily women, many of whom were abused, changed the nature of her practice. She met with representatives of front line services to propose that she work on-site in shelters and other agencies that assist abused women to provide one on one legal advice on family matters.

The service provided encompasses more than straight legal information. The lawyer is aware of a lot of resources and makes whatever referrals might be most helpful. Feedback from women and from agencies indicates that this service is helpful because it's on-site, it deals with women's specific situations and information is kept confidential. This is a unique program that has not been replicated elsewhere. It has been carefully planned to address the significant gaps in service for women in the family law system. It has been informed by a sound knowledge of the dynamics of woman abuse. It deals with abused women empathetically and recognizes the significant structural barriers they face in the system. While it cannot make up for inadequate legal aid allocations and the difficult access to committed and qualified family law lawyers, it does offer women a significant degree of support in dealing with their legal situation when they separate from a controlling partner.

As well, there is the Family Law Information Centre, a province-wide program operating in London as well as several other cities. The Centre is a three-way partnership between the Attorney General's office, Legal Aid Ontario and the Family Court in London. It offers the services of the three partners within the physical space of the court-house.

The FLIC offers a range of services, including a free information session, entitled "Couples Apart, Parents Forever," two nights each month. The Mediation Service has a Mediation Referral Coordinator who is the first point of contact. She is part of a team that includes a social worker and Advice Counsel. She provides an outline of family law matters and she may interview someone to find out more about why they are there. She asks about woman abuse.

People can book mediations through the court-house office. There is a screening process for readiness to mediate that assesses emotional readiness, capacity, mental health and addictions and power imbalances. The aim is to assess if the two people can sit down together and work out a fair agreement. On-site mediation is for anyone who is in court that day and wants to mediate short-term issues.

Advocates for abused women have long had concerns about abused women entering into mediation. They point out that the power imbalance in the relationship can carry over into the mediation process, resulting in women being further controlled or placed in danger. The staff at FLIC were less ready to dismiss mediation as an option for abused women.

FLIC staff demonstrate an awareness and understanding of woman abuse. Where possible, they have adapted and modified processes to help ensure both identification of and safety for abused women. Although it was not designed to meet the needs of abused women, the FLIC program has made accommodations. Sensitive staff can provide valuable support to abused women, but mediation should be a choice. Women should not turn to mediation only because they have exceeded their legal aid hours and this is their only option.

Services under Stress

Abused women and their children, and even abusive men, are facing increasing degrees of stress in their lives. More people turn to helping agencies with complex problems. Respondents in this study identified sources of pressure. Some, such as funding difficulties and staff workloads, are intricately related. Diminishing and unstable core funding has moved agencies to apply for more grant funding. Increasingly, grant writing is becoming an important skill in the violence against women movement. As the demand for agencies to respond to more with less continues to grow, respondents see themselves reaching their limits.

Respondents discussed the impact of working without sufficient resources, with increased workloads, more complexities and more administrative responsibilities. Some even voiced concern about being able to maintain their quality of service.

Those who work with abused women and children face pain and violence. Sometimes they absorb this, resulting in vicarious trauma. While there is still some resistance to acknowledging vicarious trauma, organizations are increasingly developing strategies to deal with it.

Accomplishments and Steps Forward

The Violence Against Women sector has met many challenges and has continued to find creative and innovative ways of working. Respondents reported many things they were proud of, including having developed a compassionate leadership and having kept the problems of societal violence and women abuse in the public eye by encouraging discussion and dialogue. The outcome has been more positive and effective community responses to woman abuse. Women in crisis now have a much better referral network they can turn to, including anonymous help lines and more recent innovations such as

Shelternet. Respondents also pointed to positive systemic changes, such as the availability of Public Health Nurses to work in shelters, the OPP decision to have a Domestic Violence Coordinator, courses on domestic violence that Ontario Crown Attorneys must now take, the stalking law, outreach programs that visit high schools and the RUCS Protocol in the mental health sector.

The Growth and Development of a Movement

Unquestionably, the violence against women sector has become more professional since its inception in the mid-70s. In the comments of respondents, I uncovered both a dialogue and a debate around what we are gaining and what we are losing in this shift. There was a feeling that funders have helped to drive the move to professionalize by requiring the hiring of professionals. A number of respondents expressed concerns about professionalization. Respondents saw professionalization, and the accompanying bureaucratization, as having a significant impact on the way services have developed, and they sometimes voiced concern that this trend is silencing and excluding those who have experience and a great deal of commitment in the movement to end violence against women. Nonetheless, respondents report that there is a mix of people who have entered the sector on their professional qualifications and those who have been trained through experience. In the final analysis, whether or not they see it as a positive trend, respondents agree that the delivery of violence against women services is being professionalized. There are still important discussions to be had around this potentially sensitive issue.

Given the degree to which funders drive the professionalization of woman abuse services, it would be a sensible investment on their part to provide adequate allocations to organizations for the professional development of their staff. The violence against women sector will benefit from dialogue about what kind of training and professional development is most needed and an examination of current initiatives. Those planning, delivering and evaluating training and professional development opportunities need to pay careful attention to what is being taught to ensure that everyone who is working in the sector has a foundational knowledge of woman abuse and its effects.

Working Towards Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity

Respondents spoke about a variety of challenges organizations face in structuring services to become more diverse and inclusive.

A feminist analysis of woman abuse points out the fact of gender inequality and its devastating effects. It is an analysis that questions and challenges cultural norms of how power is distributed. Inevitably, it is an analysis that will meet with resistance. The work of coalition building requires compromise and searching for common ground. The LCCEWA has been enormously successful in marking common ground with the mainstream institutions of Canadian society. As Canadian society diversifies, the challenge is to continue seeking common ground with individuals and organizations new to Canada.

Organizations are recognizing the need to diversify their staff and to provide services to the diversity of communities that make up our society. Across Languages has been working with violence against women services for many years to provide ethical and confidential interpreting. Across Languages is an important bridge between violence against women services and diverse communities. Domestic violence training is provided to all interpreters whether they expect to do this work or not.

In 1992, the Multicultural Committee was formed as a subcommittee of the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse. Now disbanded, this committee represented a significant effort to build bridges with a variety of culturally and ethnically diverse communities. Members of the committee got training from agencies, learned about their visions and missions and met staff, volunteers and clients. Respondents who had participated in the Multicultural Committee spoke of being situated between the often-divergent views of women's anti-violence agencies and newcomer communities.

Many respondents spoke of the difficulty of getting caught between conflicting value systems. It is essential not only to acknowledge that we are working with sometimes-conflicting value systems, but also to respect the right of others to have values that conflict with ours. This calls for respect in the face of disagreement. Openness and a willingness to learn and be flexible will be immeasurably helpful in promoting dialogue. One respondent noted how bridging cultural values could lead to designing services differently. Respondents discussed the fact that even in developing culturally sensitive services a diversity of approaches is needed and that we cannot assume that the needs of each community will be the same.

The Muslim Family Safety Project is engaged in work to promote dialogue and collaboration between the Muslim Community and main stream services to address violence against women and children. The project has made encouraging progress and has experienced a great deal of support from multiple locations in the community. It is an example of how we can work to bridge cultural differences.

Community Resource Centres

Although they are often absent from the tables where violence against women is discussed, Community Centres offer a variety of supports to abused women. As one respondent said of the programs at a Community Centre, "All services relate in some way to abused women."

These Centres offer programming for women and their children. They do some parent-child programs. They organize community outings and meet people in informal ways. They may also meet with women on an individual basis for help with anything from toilet training to making connections in the community. Relationship building is an important part of the work of Community Centres.

A respondent from one Community Centre listed the following programs, "We have a Well Baby and Well Child Clinic, parent-child literacy, a drop-in for breakfast, a pre-school that requires registration, but not an intake process; we have three hundred and

fifty kids in an after school program. We have a volunteer program. There is a Youth Worker that does recreational activities with teenagers. They have decorated their own space. The Youth Worker will do individual counselling as needed. We run a young moms' group. We have beginning level ESL classes, a clothing exchange, baby food bank, employment centre and computers. We can help with other basic needs, emergency food kits, THAW, health access vouchers for something like Tylenol. We have a Family Support Worker who works one-on-one with women; many are single moms. Many have relationship issues; most have OW problems, furniture problems. We have a collective kitchen and groups for women, senior women, parenting groups. We provide information and referral."

The work of Community Centres is very complimentary to the work of the Violence Against Women sector, "This work is addressing violence of the social isolation and Post-Traumatic Stress. It is a community development approach that builds trust, builds relationships. It teaches people to identify their problems and the sources of their problems and what they can begin to do about them. It brings people together and offers them a chance to give to the community, as well as to receive from the community."

Working Towards an Integrated Approach

Both the London and the Middlesex County Coordinating Committees to End Woman Abuse exist to promote better collaboration between organizations that work with abused women and children and abusive men. They understand the value of good communication and cooperation and spend considerable time and expend considerable resources attempting to improve that. Respondents described a multitude of creative partnerships that are at work in our community. Refer to page 110.

As policy makers and funding bodies play such a large role in the way work and responsibilities are divided, it is essential that they consult with those who are delivering services.

The Rural Context

Respondents acknowledged that women in the county have a much harder time accessing services than those in London. Representatives of some agencies and institutions acknowledged that they cannot offer the same range of services in Middlesex County as they do in London. Others noted that they provide the same range of services, but not the same depth. It was pointed out that sometimes limitations are dictated by funders because, "There is an assumption that it costs the same to deliver services in the city and the county, but in fact it costs more to work in the county."

Each community has a different mix of funding and services. A lot of services in Middlesex County are primarily related to the five employment resource centres funded by Human Resources and Skill Development Canada. Efforts are being made to take services farther out into the county, but the fact remains that there are certain pockets in county where people are struggling. Parkhill, Ailsa Craig, Lucan, Glencoe, Mount Brydes, Melborne, Poplar Hill, Thedford, Arcona, Watford, Wardsville and Newbury were all named as areas that are under-serviced.

Problems with transportation were a recurrent theme in discussions with people from the county. Some women would prefer to come to London for confidentiality reasons. Others have to come to London because services are not available elsewhere in the county. For those without transportation, getting into London or getting to another part of the county is a problem, leaving them with restricted options or, sometimes, no options at all. For the most part, each agency is trying to deal with its transportation problems in isolation and is using internal resources when they are available. The Children's Aid Society has had to provide transportation for children to their Community Group Treatment Program. Their experience helps to illustrate some of the challenges in organizing transportation in rural Middlesex County. They are not just financial.

A transportation committee to address transportation issues in Strathroy and surrounding communities, called 'The Driving Force,' was set up in 2001. It is looking at models in other areas to see if something can be set up in Middlesex. Any new initiatives will be for those associated with HRSDC, leaving the majority of abused women and their children still without transportation.

In principle, residents of Middlesex County have the same access to policing and justice services as those in London. In practice, however, there are differences, beginning with services for victims of crime. Transportation is again named as the major barrier for women in the county needing to access the Victim Witness Assistance Program. There are no allocated funds to assist someone from county to get there.

Many women in the rural focus group voiced concern over police response to woman abuse. As noted above there are several Police Services that are responsible for various parts of Middlesex County. Some initiatives are underway to improve the response to woman abuse. For example, there was a local decision to have an OPP Domestic Violence Coordinator in Middlesex County. Although a positive development, the downside is that it doesn't promote the development of expertise for dealing with domestic violence in other officers. Efforts are being made to develop this expertise in other officers, beginning with one on each platoon.

Women who have to work out custody and access agreements and/or obtain support payments from abusive ex-partners are at a definite disadvantage in Middlesex County. There are no lawyers working in the county outside of London that take legal aid clients for family issues.

While mandatory child protection services may be readily available, awareness of and access to more innovative programming such as the Community Group Treatment Program for children who have witnessed violence and their mothers is more restricted in remote areas. As well, there are no supervised access points for parents whose children are in CAS care, posing a serious obstacle for parents trying to maintain a relationship with their children and for children who want to continue seeing a parent from whom they have been separated.

Several respondents expressed concern over restricted access to women's shelters in Middlesex County. As with many other services, the shelter intended to serve county residents is located in Strathroy. Women's Rural Resource Centre will help women get to their shelter in Strathroy, but that does not solve all of the problems that women will continue to face in living far from home with no transportation.

At the same time that shelter workers at the Women's Rural Resource Centre face extra challenges in assisting the women they serve, they must work with fewer resources and diminished opportunities to access better resources. A lack of resources makes providing necessary training difficult. The situation leaves that shelter with a long list of services that they would like to be able to provide but cannot and complicates efforts to provide twenty-four-hour services.

Unfortunately, there is little to report on childcare services in Middlesex County. Respondents summed up the situation very succinctly; there are none. This lack of childcare services was named by women who have experienced abuse and respondents alike as one of the most significant barriers women face in leaving and staying out of abusive relationships.

Counselling was another area of difficulty. Agencies that do provide counselling are limited to short term counselling. This is adequate for some women, but not for others. And with the scant resources available to them, they are not able to provide advocacy for housing and legal services. Often a woman cannot fully benefit from counselling until these needs have been adequately met. Respondents also noted a lack of therapists in private practice and psychiatrists who are sensitive to violence against women. And even when the counselling services exist, women face the recurring problems of finding transportation and protecting confidentiality.

Housing, as mentioned above, is a serious problem. There is a lack of housing in rural areas, including emergency housing. This restricts people's opportunities to stay in Strathroy or other communities in Middlesex County. Affordable housing is critical to a woman's ability to stay out of an abusive relationship. Many times a woman will not even consider leaving if she knows in advance that she will not be able to obtain housing. This is an area that requires immediate attention from all levels of government.

Respondents affirmed that cuts to social services have impacted clients tremendously. They noted that people get trapped in a desperate struggle just to survive. Changes to Ontario Works, such as the imposition of a mandatory work, have also posed complications for women. Ontario Works has not responded to these concerns and is leaving many people, but especially abused women, extremely vulnerable economically. For a woman who identifies herself as leaving an abusive relationship, some barriers to accessing OW may be removed, but OW does not screen for woman abuse in Middlesex County.

Currently, education is also a real barrier to women's ability to lead lives free from violence. Educational opportunities in rural communities are quite limited. Women need

services to enable them to safely upgrade their education. A woman's level of education plays an important role in her ability to sustain herself and her family and to live free from an abusive relationship.

Confidentiality, as has been mentioned, is a serious concern for women in county. Women can't trust that their confidentiality will be respected because they often know people who are working in the services, and when clients do understand that their confidentiality will be respected, they fear that they will be seen by a neighbour. Even group counselling is difficult to deliver because of close community connections and a reluctance to meet people who are known in counselling. This can leave women with the feeling that there is no one to go to if they are being abused. Working to broadly educate communities that it is abusers who must be held accountable for their violent behaviour may help to alleviate women's unwillingness to be identified as someone who has experienced woman abuse.

Other areas of difficulty raised by respondents included the scarcity of group supports, a problem that is compounded by a lack of safe spaces where confidentiality can be preserved to run groups, poor health care services, a lack of services for youth and young women in particular, a lack of services for abusive men and a lack of services for the small Portuguese and Mennonite communities.

There was also some discussion of the more traditional values that one encounters in county and the role the churches can play in reinforcing them. Respondents were, however, careful to point out that a religion or spirituality that in any way condones abuse is a bastardization of religion and spirituality. It was also noted that attitudes towards women are evolving, along with the role of the church. Still, respondents counselled care and balance in approaching rural communities.

Currently, there are five Multi-Service Centres in Middlesex County, funded primarily through HRSDC. The intent of these Centres is to allow someone to come in and access several different services and agencies. Several of these Centres are already involved in addressing woman abuse. These multipurpose centres are one model of service delivery. Because they can provide infrastructure support, they can be a cost-effective way of bringing a greater range of services to various parts of the county. Many respondents pointed out, however, that this sort of model cannot be considered a panacea for the problems of availability of and accessibility to woman abuse services in Middlesex County.

Whatever model is implemented to address these issues, there was consensus that there is a need to improve transportation and childcare and that resources to meet these needs can't come from within existing agency budgets.

The idea of having a coordinating service offering free and confidential transportation and childcare for clients of all social service agencies was raised. It could function with a network of volunteer drivers, who are reimbursed only for their costs. It would require a

central number to call in order to arrange for a ride and childcare if needed. This sort of solution calls for funding in order to sustain it.

Other ideas included making funds available to women so that they can access buses or cabs to get to services or providing funds to the staff of agencies so that they can meet women in safe places that are also accessible to the women they are seeing.

Addressing the Imbalances of Service in London and Rural Middlesex County

A primary goal of this report was to examine the inequities in service provision that exist between London and the surrounding rural areas of Middlesex County. The section focusing on 'The Rural Context' does that. That section also contains the seeds of many ideas for beginning to address those inequities. But before we can begin to effectively work towards improving access to service for abused women and their children in the rural areas, a fundamental shift must take place. London-based service providers and decision makers, who control many of the available resources and who control the flow of those resources, must accept responsibility for serving all of Middlesex County. The current structures reinforce the geographic isolation of rural-based services and the urban-rural divide.

What Do Women Who Have Experienced Violence Think?

Two focus groups were held, one with women who had accessed services through an agency in London and one with women who had accessed service through Women's Rural Resource Centre in Strathroy. Women were invited to talk about what they saw as gaps in service, based on their own experiences. Refer to page 147.

What to Do? Recommendations

In putting these ideas together, I have thought about the theory that we make better decisions collectively than we do individually. The richness of perspective evident throughout this report makes it clear why that would be true. Still collective decision making is a challenging process. Finding a respectful balance of power in our decision making processes will make it easier to speak to one another and to listen to one another.

As the author of this report, I have just two recommendations;

1. Be conscious of power and try to use it respectfully when you are involved in decision making processes.
2. Keep talking to each other. You have many creative and insightful ideas and a wealth of experience to compliment them.

This report contains thoughts and observations as they were presented to me. The recommendations below are summarized. The full texts from which I drew these recommendations are included in the body of the report. There is a clear consensus that we have to work with each other. The report contains information about how we are doing that and how we might do that in new ways. These are ideas and experiences that

ought to give shape to discussions, inform decisions and prompt new processes. Some of these recommendations are within the purview of those who sit at the tables of the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse and the Middlesex County Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse. Others are not, but may be brought forward to appropriate policy makers. Not all of the answers are in the recommendations. Many fine analyses and suggestions for moving forward are contained in the thoughts and observations presented throughout this report.

I have divided recommendations into categories, with some hesitation because the categories cross over. The boundaries of our work are fluid.

Education

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario

- Allocate funding to support the implementation of the Safe Schools Act. Fully fund violence prevention work in all Boards of Education across the Province. Stop expecting Boards of Education to fund violence prevention initiatives from existing budgets.
- Support female-centred education, put books written and published by women in classrooms.

Recommendations for the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario

- Provide mandatory education on teaching violence prevention at the Teacher College level, which includes teaching on how to create a relationship with students to talk about violence and healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Provide education to teachers about how witnessing and/or experiencing violence impacts learning.
- Conduct a longitudinal research study to evaluate the effectiveness of providing graduating teachers with education on violence prevention and the effects of witnessing and/or experiencing violence on learning.

Recommendations for the Thames Valley District School Board, Educators and Community-Based Organizations

- Ensure that violence prevention education starts with children as soon as they enter school and continues until they graduate.
- Continue to foster coordinated partnerships between community-based services and the Education sector to create multidimensional strategies for learning about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Integrate this learning

into the classroom and the school culture, through translating it into educational experiences.

- Work with youth rather than kicking them out of school. Explore alternatives such as family-group conferencing that bring together the victim, the perpetrators and the families to try to come to some sort of resolution and reparation. If having the family present is not feasible or not helpful, try having peers present as peers are often involved in making changes.
- Eliminate barriers for homeless kids in a shelter or trying to live independently after a shelter to get into school. If they can't go to school, the chances that they will end up in prison increase dramatically.
- Teach knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours about healthy relationships and understanding violence in relationships through various modalities of learning. Offer multidimensional ways of learning to support integration and internalization of the messages. Use value driven, holistic approaches that engage students both cognitively and emotionally
- Make sensitizing students on the issue of sexual harassment part of the curriculum design.
- Develop more violence prevention programs that meet curriculum needs. Provide scripted programs and introduce a language for the teacher delivering the programs.
- Encourage girls to get a good education. Work to counter socialization, especially that which occurs through the media, to sexualize girls and women.
- Spend time, effort and money in prevention work and on offender treatment work.
- Provide education to abused women about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Help them to identify abuse and to learn about their right to live a life free from violence.

Women and Their Children

Recommendations for the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario and the London City Council

- Provide more daycare in both informal and formal settings.
- Establish storefront daycare centres, where mothers can leave their children for short periods of time and get a break for a nominal fee.

- Provide more opportunities for women to interact with each other and other kids. Give mothers access to good parenting role models. Let them learn by interacting with others who have good parenting skills.
- Provide more opportunities for women who experience abuse to engage in recreational and leisure activities, to counter their sense of being trapped in an economic and social space where they see no alternatives to being in an abusive relationship.
- Provide more opportunities for children whose mothers have been abused, especially those that have low incomes, to engage in extracurricular activities.
- Increase the available support and respite for families in crisis that can't keep their families together.
- Provide supportive transitional housing for women who have experienced abuse where they have access to health care, counselling, life skills training, employment retraining, continuing education, childcare, addictions counselling and parenting programs.
- Provide adequate financial supports to women who have experienced abuse. The women who are most successful at getting out of abusive situations have support systems and financial resources.

Youth

Recommendation for the Government of Ontario

- Address the gap in services for fourteen to sixteen-year-olds. Either establish services for this age group or lower the age of intake for existing services.

Alternative Service Delivery

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario

- Consult with the community to examine and explore how to deliver services effectively and cost-effectively. Ask; what would work best in this community?
- Have more transitional support workers working in shelters. Offer women options other than extending their stays in shelters by providing advocacy and assistance in navigating all the systems they must deal with when they leave shelter.

- Provide support to abused men through transitional support workers, offering referral and consultation with other community services where appropriate.
- Help families to deal with stress by offering more free and inexpensive community-based recreational programs. This can help to alleviate the isolation that exacerbates the problem of violence against women and children.
- Create more community-based programs for the development of healthy families. Develop preventative programs to help families before they get into crisis.
- Support women's economic autonomy and independence.

Recommendations for Community Based Organizations

- Make services more accessible by setting them up in easy to reach locations and by sending workers out into the community more, rather than always expecting those in need of service to come into an office.
- Work with a harm reduction approach. Offer the same advocacy and support to abused women who do not want to come into shelter. This is particularly important for newcomer women and other women such as lesbians who tend not to use shelter services.
- Engage men in this work to end violence against women and children. Give men an opportunity to reach out to other men to help to keep women safe.
- Think about our services and how we deliver them. Possibilities include; an on-site woman abuse advocate in every community neighbourhood centre, childcare on site at all services, programs that are not stigmatizing, a woman abuse advocate in every library.
- Work with the people that surround abused women. Most abused women's primary support and information comes from friends and families.
- Build capacity in churches and faith based groups to support abused women.
- Build community as well as agencies.
- Provide ongoing support through mentoring. Identify opportunities to meet people where they are at and offer them role models.

Community Centres

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario and the Government of the City of London

- Reinststate core funding for Community Resource Centres.
- Ensure that programs that break the isolation for women and other vulnerable members of the community are supported in the current City of London plans to expand Community Centres. Every neighbourhood should have a neighbourhood centre. The City has a Master Plan that is focused on recreation. It looks at providing large physical structures, but overlooks the needs of the most marginalized.
- Assist Community Centres to meet the rising costs of programming. They help to build capacity in neighbourhoods and in people, especially where poverty is a big problem.

Aboriginal Communities

Recommendations for the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, the Government of the City of London and Community-Based Organizations

- Let aboriginal people take the lead in aboriginal communities. Remember the words of *The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*; “The rebalancing of political and economic power between Aboriginal nations and other Canadian governments represents the core of the hundreds of recommendations contained in this report. Unless accompanied by a rebalancing of power, no progress can be made on other fronts without perpetuating the status quo. The effects of the past will not be undone overnight.”²
- Explore the possibility of training and supporting a first response team of community volunteers to respond to woman abuse on reserves.
- Use At^ˆlohsa to facilitate of a process between trusted community members and local police services to develop community protocols.
- Provide Police Services with cultural training about Aboriginal peoples, their values and their history.
- Support Aboriginal communities in their efforts to help their members resolve grief. Much rage results from limited or no accountability for intergenerational trauma.

² *The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, (Volume 5 - *Renewal: A Twenty-Year Commitment. 1 - Laying the Foundations of a Renewed Relationship 1. A New Beginning* http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/skml_e.html)

Diverse Communities

Recommendations for the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario and Community-Based Organizations

- Provide support to new immigrants to adapt to new cultural norms. Immigrant families often have new roles in Canada. They have to deal with unfamiliar customs. Men and women need support to adapt.
- Don't make newcomers fit the program. Adapt models to meet the needs of other communities. Plan culturally specific programs. Work within belief systems and cultural norms. It could be something as simple as choosing a time that fits into community routines.
- Build the cost of interpreting into our services. Follow the lead of big companies that think the cost of interpreting should be built into the cost of their products.
- Research the situation of newcomers in London.
- Engage people that know the community. The value of immigrants working with immigrants is that they have the background understanding of cultural issues.
- Set up fun groups that can serve many purposes; that can break isolation. Let women talk while they are baking, it's not always necessary to tackle the issue directly.
- Make use of available community resources like MAROC, whose mandate is to increase access to social services in London to members of diverse and minority communities. They will help to develop policies and work plans. They can help with the change process, with tools, videos, models for policies. They can help you to evaluate where you are at.

Coordination

Recommendations for Community-Based Organizations

- Reach out in ways that encourage people to work together to ensure that everyone is safe.
- Review the membership of the LCCEWA. Our community has grown and changed since it was established. Community agencies like Glen Cairn and LUSO didn't exist. John Howard was never invited to be part of LCCEWA. Sometimes non-members have felt excluded from information sessions and committees.

- Encourage connections and networking with a range of community groups. Community work is meant to supplement emergency services. We have narrowed the definition of abuse and the definition of service for abused women.
- Develop intercultural relationships and understanding. There are a lot of cultural groups that don't have an agency but have a leader that could be at the table.
- Look at how do we put theory into practice. Sit together and do actual case reviews, from CAS, VAW, police and the Crown. Perhaps also have consumers sitting at the table.
- Go back to what we know works; women talking to each other and really listening. Don't lose what we've learned.
- Continue to collaborate. Think beyond outcomes and pathologizing.
- Create separate community protocols for woman abuse and sexual violence. There is some overlap, but we are not always dealing with the same problems.
- Cross appoint representatives to the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse and the Early Years Council. This could facilitate a reporting relationship that lets each sector know what's important for the other group to know about.
- Cultivate relationships with leaders of agencies that have a mandate that goes beyond addressing violence against women and the LCCEWA. A team of direct and indirect services representatives enriches learning.

Longer Term Supports

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario

- Invest five or six years of good services into women who are sexually abused as children. Help them get them education, retraining and sustained counselling. Sexual abuse is a complex problem and it is intergenerational. A therapist reported seeing the daughters of women who she counselled for sexual abuse. Child abuse destroys the foundation of everything. It takes two generations to heal. After they have been to counselling, many women need life skills and parenting support.
- Understand that women abuse and child abuse are not separate issues. Women often leave when children are abused. It may be a couple of years after a woman leaves that she uncovers her own abuse.

- Invest in an integrated three to five year plan to support women to leave abusive relationships. Conduct a longitudinal research study to follow these women. Show that it will work.
- Provide long term program funding. Women who have been abused have deep-standing issues that will take a long time to address. We can't meet real needs with projects with short-term outcomes.

Income Support

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario

- Give women help with basic needs and provide social support. Economics are the biggest challenge. If women have their heat turned off and they are at the food bank and they can't get any more food, all the counselling in the world won't help. They may have to get back into an abusive relationship to get the basics. They become very embittered. They feel hopeless.
- Eliminate the claw-back of the national child tax benefit for women receiving assistance through Ontario Works.
- Recognize that ex-spouses who have been abusive partners may not pay support payments to women on Ontario Works. Ex-spouses should make payments directly to Ontario Works so that women are not penalized if payments are not made.
- Ensure that we are not reinforcing the idea that people living in poverty can't expect much. Return calls promptly, tell women what they are eligible for.

Housing

Recommendations for the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario and the Government of the City of London

- Provide geared-to-income housing that is not ghettoized. Affordable and safe places for women and their children to live just don't exist. A lack of affordable housing, especially for women who aren't educated and who don't have jobs push women into the sex industry or into criminal activity in order to survive.
- Provide more Second Stage Housing so that stays can be extended. For many women a year is not long enough. It's not time to settle legal and custody issues, to find affordable housing near good schools for their kids. One woman recently moved out of Second Stage after three years. It turned out to be the best thing she could have done. When she left she was ready to go and her kids were ready. She was forty. A supportive dentist

gave her new teeth and she was able to smile. She had her face smashed in so many times and had received such poor health care because she was low income that she had no teeth left. She has a severely disabled child in his twenties. She had programs that had to be set up for him; he went from youth to adult programs. When he left, he was actually saying words. She would have ended up back in shelter if she had left sooner. There's a woman that needed the service a little longer. A provider asserts; "I would love to be able to house the senior women we have until they leave this earth."

Recommendations for Community-Based Organizations

- Tell women they should be picky about their housing. Some women have been told, 'Beggars can't be choosers.' They deserve safe affordable housing near green space and good schools for their kids.

Work

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario

- Let people receiving Ontario Disability Support Payments or Ontario Works work for a few hours a week to supplement their income. People feel that they want to contribute. There are many people who can't do full time work. They are employable part-time or employable with a support person, but they could never work forty hours a week. Some of them are also trying to raise children. Give encouragement and room to earn small amounts of money and let them keep it. It would help people with their self-esteem. They would model working for their kids. All or nothing doesn't work.
- Recognize abuse as a barrier to work. Provide employment-related supports, skill development and advocacy and training for women who have experienced abuse. Provide sensitivity training to the staff of employment agencies.

Health Care

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario

- Provide primary health care in shelters for women. Perhaps set up a residency rotation or nurse practitioner through the Intercommunity Health Centre. This could serve all the shelters collectively. A nurse practitioner could accompany the public health nurse from the Family Abuse Prevention Project.
- Provide primary health care via nurse practitioners in Community Centres. There are two groups of women; those in shelters and those in the

community. Those in the community are more vulnerable. They are not connected.

- Give women in shelters drug benefits, access to birth control and vouchers for non-prescription drugs for things like Tylenol, cough medicine and calamine lotion.
- Maintain drug cards and bus passes for women even through Ontario Works overpayments.

Mental Health

Recommendation for the Government of Ontario

- Put a woman abuse specialist on mental health teams in the hospital.

Recommendations for Community-Based Organizations

- Work closely with mental health agencies. Make efforts to provide services for women through one agency. Either have staff come to one agency or provide transportation money when needed.
- Continue to work with the mental health and addictions sectors to understand the links to woman abuse.
- Provide education on trauma to all these sectors. The gap is not sector-specific, and general training would save money. The resources to develop this training do exist within the community.

Training

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario

- Create a bar admission course on domestic violence and child sexual abuse. There is some place for woman abuse training in law school, but many law graduates do not do criminal law or family law. It may be useful to provide a universal course. It would be an overview at best. It may also help potential lawyers to decide whether or not they are prepared to deal with woman abuse.
- Provide diversity training to all Police Services to enable them to respond appropriately to diverse cultures.
- Reinstate funding for joint training between the Children's Aid Society and the Violence Against Women sector. Child protection workers are social workers first. This training helps to reinforce the values of the work. It fosters cooperation, making it easier to work together to meet needs of

women and children. Participation should be determined community by community.

Recommendations for Community-Based Organizations

- Provide woman abuse training for maintenance staff and property managers at London Housing.
- Provide woman abuse training with staff from LEADS Employment and Training Centre.
- Recognize that there is a huge variance in the comfort levels of many service providers and the specialists. Assist all workers to the point where they are comfortable hearing disclosures and making a referral.
- Address the tension between wanting to train other professionals and the tendency to want to claim exclusive expertise through open dialogue.

Funding

Recommendations for the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario and the Government of the City of London and all funding agencies

- Women are connected to the federal, provincial and municipal governments. All levels of government must play a role in providing support. The issue belongs to everyone.
- Recognize that there are some things that will not pay for themselves in the short term, but that we must do them anyway for the social good. Begin to think about and plan for long term change that will slowly ease the financial burden of caring for people who have been left marginalized and powerless and that will reduce the societal costs that result from violence, poverty and social exclusion.
- Create more flexibility around funding mandates. For example, HRSDC funds employment training, without recognizing that needs are more fluid. Avoid a compartmentalization of service delivery.
- Provide core funding for programs in Community Centres. They are helping women to lead healthier lives. They provide a wide range of care and emotional support. Currently much of this work is project-funded.
- Make the conditions and expectations for grant funding more realistic. Allow applicants to work for modest outcomes, recognizing that social change is a complex and time consuming process. This will help to level the playing field for smaller organizations that are competing with larger organizations that are able to make bigger claims for change. Make

allowance for reasonable administrative costs. Do not impose unrealistic expectations of sustainability and volunteer involvement after grants end.

- Recognize that even when partnerships can provide opportunities for low-cost programming, the overhead costs of providing space for running the programs remains.
- Fund easy-to-get small grants to develop collaborative relationships. Allow for the administrative expenses of building collaborative relationships. Recognize the added expenses for rural and small agencies.
- Return to the recommendations of the legal aid review of a few years ago. It was determined that we need to keep the certificate model, but we are moving more towards clinic models. Technically the clinic could represent the abuser and the abused, and the women may not go there if they think there is a chance their partner could go there. It would be a conflict of interest to serve both.

Recommendation for Community-Based Organizations

- Learn from private sector institutions without violating the integrity of the work to prevent, stop and end violence against women and children.

Government

Recommendations for the Government of Ontario

- Explore options for organizing how funding flows to the violence against women sector. Consolidating everything dealing with woman abuse in one ministry is one possibility. Creating an inter-ministerial committee, not necessarily at the highest level, but including those that are involved in the work is another. A better structure for internal communication is needed.
- Seek out opportunities for more coordination at the ministerial level. Ministries, including the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the Ontario Women's Directorate have different perspectives on service delivery.
- Focus on the gendered nature of violence. When we use the concept of 'victim,' we don't recognize that the majority of clients in the majority of programs for victims are women abused in relationships. Continue efforts to understand woman abuse from a feminist perspective.
- Consult with agencies, especially small agencies and those working in rural areas, before flowing new funding to ensure that services will be organized in ways that will optimally meet the needs of the community.

Recommendations for the Government of the City of London

- Cities have a lot to do with meeting the needs of the population. In many cities around the world, people don't need transportation. There are small shops for shopping, not malls. Some newcomer seniors have never been to the mall. Plan new development in ways that promote self sufficient neighbourhoods.

Decision Making

Recommendations for all who work to prevent, stop and end violence against women and children

- Clarify and understand the values we are working with. Revisit them occasionally.
- Don't let the challenges conquer and divide us in this work.
- Move forward with real interest and real caring. Everything is slow. Start with what we have.
- Move forward in innovative ways, without replicating what has always been done. Meet the challenge of keeping the gains and the accomplishments and discard what doesn't work. Let go of what doesn't serve human need. Set the tone of the work, don't be in reactive mode.
- Get time and space away from crisis management for reflection and to think and talk about planning.
- Look at multiple strategies to recover the caring capacity of our society. Currently the number of people needing services outstrips the number of caregiver hours available.
- Remember where we have come from and what has been accomplished and what is still left to do.

