

I just wish I had seen some signs:
domestic violence in the
workplace

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Sisters in Spirit

- October 4th Vigil to remember our sisters in spirit. Over 500 Aboriginal women have gone missing.



Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

ACWS serves as the collective voice for 41 sheltering organizations through:

- *Networking and information sharing.*
- *Acquiring adequate resources.*
- Undertaking *policy and systems research* in order to influence social change that reduces and prevents domestic violence.
- Increasing *public awareness* of issues related to family violence.
- Providing *professional development* for Alberta's sheltering movement.

Where we work

- Alberta leads the provinces in domestic assault, homicide-suicide, stalking and is third in domestic homicide.
- From 2000 – 2006, over 170 homicides are conservatively estimated as domestic violence related. This represents about one third of all homicides in the province.
- There are approximately 8 attempted femicides for each femicide in Canada.



I was unaware of the staggering statistics. . .

During the 2006 – 2007 fiscal year, in Alberta:

- Over 13,000 women and children were resident in shelter.
- Over 27,000 women and children were turned away.
- Shelters received over 100,000 crisis calls (15% increase).
- 53% of women admitted into Alberta emergency shelters self-identify as Aboriginal.

Alberta's shelters respond

- 78% of women resident in shelter are at high or serious risk of assault or homicide.
- By exit survey, over 95% are more able to keep themselves and their children safe, as a result of their stay in shelter.
- Currently, 21% of emergency shelter bed capacity; 81% and 77% of second stage and senior's shelters, respectively, *remain unfunded by the provincial government.*

Alberta's shelters respond

In 2006, children were:

- 47% of residents in emergency shelters
- 65% of residents in on-reserve shelters
- 62% of residents in second stage shelters

Over 11,000 children were unable to be accommodated in shelters.

What the data indicates

- Women and children resident in shelter have fled from serious incidents of family violence.
- Aboriginal children represent over half of the children in all Alberta shelters and are an important demographic in need of specialist intervention that currently does not exist.
- Shelters are providing effective interventions and women are learning and willing to learn how to keep themselves and their dependants safe.

What the data indicates

- Far too many women and children do not receive access to resident programs in Alberta's shelters, because there is simply not enough space.
- While 57% of Aboriginal women access emergency shelters, only 34% enter second stage housing and are able to benefit from those longer and more preventative based programs.

What is working in Alberta

Children in treatment groups significantly decreased their anxiety, improved their attitudes and response to anger, and decreased their sense of responsibility for both their parents and the violence.

Observation from an Alberta shelter, YWCA national study (2005)



What we've learned

The role of women's emergency and second stage shelters in protecting children from family violence cannot be overstated. Because of their interventions, many children have found safe haven.

Shelter staff are community experts on domestic violence.

The research is clear

The Occupational Health Office for Ontario Workers has identified domestic violence in the workplace as the fastest growing category of work place violence in Canada (2005). In fact, *lack of awareness of how to anticipate violent situations and respond appropriately* has been identified as a key characteristic that creates risk on the job.

Domestic violence in the workplace

In the last few weeks in Alberta, two incidents have received substantial news coverage:

1. The murder of Lori Dupont (Ontario)
2. The Liana White *Walk of Hope* (Alberta)

Domestic violence in the workplace

The murder of Lori Dupont:

An inquest into the killing of Lori Dupont began on Monday, September 24, 2007, in Windsor, Ontario. She was stabbed to death in November 2005 by her former boyfriend, anesthesiologist Marc Daniel, who also worked at the Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital. He later took his own life. The inquest will examine domestic violence issues, and how, despite reports of harassment by Daniel, both the hospital and the justice system failed to protect her.



CBC news: www.cbc.ca/national

Domestic violence in the workplace

The murder of Liana White:

Liana's life and the life of her unborn child ended tragically at the tender age of 29 in July 2005. She was brutally murdered by her husband, who was found guilty and is currently in prison. Her daughter Ashley lives with her grandmother, Liana's mom. Liana worked at the Royal Alexandra Hospital.



<http://www.lianaswalkforhope.com>

Not out of thin air. . .

The process of such violent offenses does *not come out of thin air*. Violent and abusive individuals show clear signs of their attitudes and feelings before they act. The question is who is there to observe, and having observed, what do those people do with that information? **This case provides many examples of how persons untrained in dealing with abusive individuals miss the mark.** This knowledge and expertise is readily available and has been for years among those who work with and assess violent offenders. Where was that expertise here? I hope the hospital officials self soothing belief they did all they could morally and practically will be replaced in future by a competent understanding of abusive behavior.

Barry Williscroft M.A., R.C.C.
Public response to the Dupont murder (CBC blog).

Know the signs

The CBC documentary on the Dupont murder is telling.

- *People don't know what to do. Her family changed the locks and spent nights with her in her home.*
- *The hospital changed her parking but still reassigned Daniel to her surgery.*
- *The nurses circled her; the doctors appear unresponsive.*
- *Dupont's parents: "We trusted the hospital."*
- *The hospital's administrators: "It was a private matter."*

More than a bully

- Nurse Brenda Hooper told the inquest she had to run interference between Dupont and Daniel, who she characterized as a bully who often threw his weight around.
- She said on one occasion she saw Daniel purposely hip-check Dupont into a wall. Another time, Hooper said, she herself felt threatened when Daniel told her, "I hate you all. If I could take you all down, I would."
- She reported her concerns about Daniel's behaviour to her supervisor and she was told that "Lori and Marc were grown adults and could deal with their own problems."

CBC News, Thursday, September 27, 2007

Know the signs

The signs of danger:

1. The woman recently left the relationship.
2. The presence of a step-child.
3. The woman is pregnant.
4. The perpetrator is unemployed.
5. The perpetrator is highly controlling.
6. The perpetrator owns a gun.

The signs

Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell's *Danger Assessment* lethality instrument (please see handout):

- Developed to increase battered women's ability to take care of themselves.
- Direct questions identify those most at risk of being killed by the perpetrator.
- It is difficult for many women to believe that the person they have loved is capable of killing them.
- This is a proactive response to the issue and the danger.
- By getting the victim to services you enhance their chance of survival.

www.dangerassessment.com

The signs

- The Danger Assessment clarifies what may well seem chaotic.
- The picture develops in full relief when used with the calendar.

November 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

I know who I am. I am that woman who reached her breaking point, and after a good cry, I stood.

-Andrea Fikkert

One consequence

Windsor's Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital and nine of its senior administrators and doctors face a \$13.5 million lawsuit in the murder of a nurse by a mentally unstable doctor last November (2005). The doctor had had an intimate relationship with the nurse; the event was a homicide-suicide.

As reported in the *Edmonton Journal*, Saturday, 25 February 2006.

What about the staff?

We know what Canadians want in their workplace, in ranked order:

1. Respectful treatment.
2. Healthy and safe work environment.
3. Trustworthy senior management.
4. Work-life balance.
5. Sense of pride and accomplishment.
6. Training to do job effectively.

Rethinking Work, national worker survey.
EKOS Research Associates & The Graham Lowe Group, fall 2004.

Friends speak their grief

The effect of this act of violence was like an earthquake through my whole life. There is no way that something this traumatic can happen and not affect all aspects of our lives. I was physically at work, but mentally I was everywhere but there. I am sure that my work suffered, but my employer was very understanding. I was away from work attending court to testify and to hear the verdict and sentencing. To this day I will reschedule my days to assist her daughter and mother when necessary. It has been two years and I have not had a single day it has not impacted me in some way.

Family friend of Liana White

Colleagues speak their grief

My life is forever changed because of Liana and her tragic death. . . I know personally about 2 – 3 weeks after it happened, I was still not feeling alright about things and life in general. It took a long time to get back on track.

Colleague of Liana White

I could never have predicted that domestic violence would come into my life in this way. . .

Being involved in a highly publicized murder case has not only been very trying on my family life, but in my work life as well. . . Everyone at work knew what I was going through (and continue to go through to this day) and they all felt it, they could see it on my face.

Colleague of Liana White

Liana's tragic murder has been a hard lesson in reality.

What do we have, today?

- Two women are dead.
- One man is dead.
- Daniel's wife received a traumatic suicide call.
- Two grandmothers are now raising their granddaughters.
- Families mourn.
- Colleagues mourn.
- Friends mourn.
- Lawsuits.

***Liana's tragic murder has been
a hard lesson in reality.***



Both Liana and Lori have left behind little girls, for their grandmothers to raise. Liana's daughter is now 5 and Lori's daughter is 9. The issues both these children now face are enormous. The social provisions for their care are thin.

It's time to act.



1ST WORLD CONFERENCE
OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Discovering the
Common Core

PRACTICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR CHANGE

September 8-11, 2007 - SHAW Conference Centre - Edmonton, AB