

# ACWS POSITION ON Public Education

March 25, 2004

**ACWS believes that broad-based public education on family violence is a critical component of a long-term, sustainable strategy towards creating a society free from violence and abuse.**

Training is essential for an effective community response to domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> Businesses, health care providers, social service agencies and churches are important community resources for dealing with domestic violence. But they must have training to recognize and effectively serve the women and children who are victims of abuse. Further, they must be aware of community assets and legal remedies to appropriately refer them.<sup>2</sup>

Politicians need access to accurate, current data and information about the extent and nature of domestic violence in order to make good policy decisions, effect good legislation and increase services for domestic violence victims.

Religious organizations need to provide training for seminarians, clergy and church personnel on domestic violence issues. Pastors should be encouraged to preach on the issue and provide support services for victims.

Police officers, court workers, legal counsel and the judiciary need similar training in order to appropriately respond to domestic violence situations through the implementation of risk and danger assessments, making arrests, providing legal counsel, making appropriate custody and access decisions, etc. based on a true understanding of family violence and the devastating impact it has on people's lives.

Health care providers – physicians, dentists, nurses, social workers, physician assistant, emergency medical technicians, nurse practitioners – are in good positions to detect the possible presence of abuse in the people they see and can help if they are informed about how to identify family violence and how to provide assistance. They should be given training on how to detect signs of domestic violence and must develop protocols for dealing with it.

Promote an integrated approach to treatment of offenders according to best practices and accredited programs standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Child Custody and Domestic Violence: A Call for Safety and Accountability” Peter Jaffe, Nancy Lemon, Samantha Poisson, Sage Publications, 2003

<sup>2</sup> (“Domestic Violence – Everybody’s Business” – Report of Multnomah County Family Violence Intervention Steering Committee, 1997)

Teachers and educators need to be encouraged to access expanded domestic violence prevention training in schools and develop protocols for handling disclosure.

The province as well as local school districts, should fund programs for domestic violence prevention.

Coordinated community based response requires that child welfare agencies and women's shelters work together to stop the violence. It is time shelter workers are recognized as important players in an integrated provincial response. (Submission to Child Welfare Act Review pg. 9)

Cross training is included as a key element to successful collaborations (together with establishing common ground, understanding the roles of each service system including constraints and pressures under which they operate (Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse. "Domestic Violence in the Context of Child Abuse and Neglect" – Lesley Laing - [http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/topics/topics\\_pdf\\_files/child\\_protection.pdf](http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/topics/topics_pdf_files/child_protection.pdf)

***Supporting local cross-training efforts can deepen understanding among agencies.*** Multiple local agencies may be interested in Pgs 12 – 14 of Roundtable document.