



Woman Abuse Affects Our Children

An Educator's Guide



**Developed by the English-language
Expert Panel for Educators**

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FOREWORD

This Educator's Guide is designed for elementary teachers, principals and guidance counsellors to help them identify children who have been or may be exposed to woman abuse and to provide appropriate support and referrals.

The Guide and an accompanying Facilitator's Manual were developed by an Expert Panel which was formed as part of the Ontario government's Domestic Violence Action Plan. The English-language Expert Panel has developed these training materials for educators, with the aim of better supporting women and their children, and reducing abuse. In addition to the English-language Expert Panel, whose work is represented here, a French-language Expert Panel has also developed materials for their elementary schools.

The English-language Expert Panel included representatives from provincial elementary teacher organizations, principal councils and school and Native guidance associations. In addition, Panel members came from Ontario Faculties of Education, community-based groups providing support for immigrant and refugee women and organizations renowned and respected for their violence prevention work. Funding has been provided by the Ontario government, Ontario Women's Directorate.

The development of these products has been a cooperative effort involving all panel members from the initial conceptual stages through numerous reviews and revisions.

As Chair of the Panel, I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has been part of this endeavour. The hard work, care, and concern will provide elementary school educators with the tools and training they need to combat woman abuse and protect children in their care.

Paula Bourne

Chair, English-language Expert Panel for Educators

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Importance of this Topic

Why you need to know

Each year, children and adolescents are exposed to violence in their homes, schools, neighbourhoods, and through the media.^{1, 2, 3, 4} A significant proportion of these young people are exposed to woman abuse—abusive behaviour used by an intimate partner to control and dominate a woman. Students touched by this form of violence often experience short and long term impacts that may affect their readiness and ability to learn in terms of literacy, numeracy, and social skills.

- Children and adolescents living with woman abuse are at increased risk for emotional and behavioural problems,^{4, 5} including increased violent behaviour.^{6, 7, 8} They also have an increased risk of experiencing emotional or physical abuse.^{5, 6, 9} These difficulties may compromise their ability to learn and get along with others at school.
- Early identification of difficulties can lead to earlier and more effective support and intervention for young people and their families. Educators are in an ideal position to identify when a student is having difficulty.
- School-based interventions and prevention initiatives can reduce risk and increase protective factors for students. Educators are often caring adults who can make a difference in the lives of students who are experiencing difficulties at home.

Intimate partner violence is perpetrated against men and women and occurs in homosexual and heterosexual relationships. All relationship violence is unacceptable, is harmful to the victim, and threatens the well-being and security of children within the family.

This guide focuses on the effects on elementary school students when violence is perpetrated against their mothers by male partners. Survey findings estimate 7 percent of Canadian women report violence by their partners, almost half incurring injuries.¹⁰ Factors contributing to the dynamic of violence against women in our society include: the social, economic, and political inequality of women; the socialization of girls to place the needs of others over their own and to value males more than females; stereotypes of masculinity indicating that being powerful and in control are good and that expressing feelings is a sign of weakness; societal attitudes condoning violence against women, such as portrayals of women in films and on television as legitimate targets of violence.

Violence against women is everybody's business! Responses to woman abuse should:

- provide safety
- foster the emotional well-being of women and children
- hold abusive individuals accountable
- include funding for agencies providing services and supports to survivors of violence and abuse

This requires coordination between all levels and sectors of government and community services—the justice system, violence prevention services, the healthcare system, family service agencies, housing authorities, immigrant and refugee services, faith groups, and schools. Responses must also include:

- public awareness campaigns
- education initiatives to equip professionals, family, friends, and neighbours to safely support women and children
- prevention initiatives to target the root causes of violence

How this guide can help

This guide contains information that will help you:

- learn about woman abuse and its impact on children and adolescents
- offer information about resources available to mothers who may be victims of woman abuse
- recognize the signs that students may display when they are living with woman abuse
- learn ways to support students and some strategies to deal with challenging behaviours in school

GLOSSARY

When we use these terms, we mean the following:

Abused partner

An individual who is abused by her intimate partner. Used interchangeably with survivor, victimized parent, and adult victim. Many advocates prefer the term “survivor,” as it reflects the reality that many abused individuals cope and move on with personal strength, resourcefulness, and determination.

Adolescent dating violence

The use of power and control tactics against a partner within a teen dating relationship.

Batterers’ intervention programs

Interventions to help abusive men identify and stop using power and control tactics in relationships. Participants are taught the attitudes and behaviours that define healthy, equal relationships.

Child abuse

Also called “child maltreatment,” a term that can mean physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, and/or physical or emotional neglect, and/or denial of medical care.

Child exposure to woman abuse

Seeing, hearing, being told about, or seeing the aftermath of a mother’s abuse by her intimate partner.

Coping strategy

A way to cope with an emotionally painful situation. Sometimes referred to as survival strategies.

Domestic violence

The abuse and/or assault of adolescents or adults by their intimate partners. Used interchangeably with “intimate partner abuse.”

Power and control tactics

A pattern of behaviour involving coercion, threats, intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, using male privilege, minimizing the seriousness of abusive behaviour, denial of harm, etc.

GLOSSARY (continued)

Settlement services

Services that assist newcomers to adjust to and navigate life in their new community. Clients are helped to work past barriers related to housing, education, community services, etc. Information and referral assistance are also part of the continuum of services.

Spousal violence

Term used by Statistics Canada to refer to self-reported physical and sexual violence as defined by the criminal code. Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization in 1999 and in 2004 measured spousal violence against men and women through telephone interviews with respondents who were married or living common-law at the time of the survey interview, or who had been married or in a common-law relationship within the 5-year period preceding the survey and who had had contact with their ex-partner during that time interval.

Woman abuse

A pattern of male behaviour characterized by power and control tactics against a woman, which may or may not involve physical assault. The spectrum of abuse ranges from insults through to life-threatening injuries and even murder. Woman abuse can take one, two, or more of these forms: emotional abuse (e.g., degrading comments, withholding health card or immigration documents); economic abuse (e.g., denying access to money); sexual abuse (e.g., forcing sexual activity); spiritual abuse (e.g., preventing participation in faith-based observances); environmental abuse (e.g., making the home setting aversive for partner); physical abuse (e.g., punching, kicking, choking). Used interchangeably with "violence against women."



Understanding Woman Abuse Helps us Support Affected Students

Woman Abuse...

- ⇒ occurs in all age, racial, cultural, socioeconomic, educational, occupational, and religious groups
- ⇒ is caused by factors contributing to the dynamic of violence against women in society such as: the social, economic, and political inequality of women; the socialization of girls to place the needs of others over their own and to value males more than females; stereotypes of masculinity indicating that being powerful and in control are good; societal attitudes condoning violence against women
- ⇒ occurs within a current or past intimate relationship
- ⇒ typically involves repetitive behaviour, including different types of abuse—physical assault, psychological, emotional and economic abuse, and use of children (see Power and Control Wheel, page 6)
- ⇒ can involve severe forms of violence (e.g., beating, choking, burning) that result in serious injuries¹⁰
- ⇒ is used to intimidate, humiliate, or frighten women as a systematic way of maintaining power and control over them (see Power and Control Wheel, page 6)
- ⇒ is abusive behaviour that in most cases is learned (e.g., abusive behaviour modelled in family of origin; abusive behaviour rewarded—gets desired results for abuser)
- ⇒ **is caused by the abuser** and not by the woman or the relationship
- ⇒ is a criminal offence where actual or threatened physical or sexual force is used
- ⇒ may present increased risk to the woman and her children at the time of separation from the abuser¹¹
- ⇒ results in survivor behaviour focused on ensuring survival (e.g., minimizing, self-blaming, or denying the violence; protecting the abuser; abusing alcohol or drugs; using aggression as self-defence; seeking help; remaining in the abusive relationship)

Power and Control Wheel

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project counsels men with a pattern of abusing their female partners. Their model shows how power and control tactics are the hallmarks of woman abuse. The goal of the abuser is to use physical, economic, or other power to assert control and to put the woman in a position of powerlessness. Woman abuse can take one, two, or more of these forms.

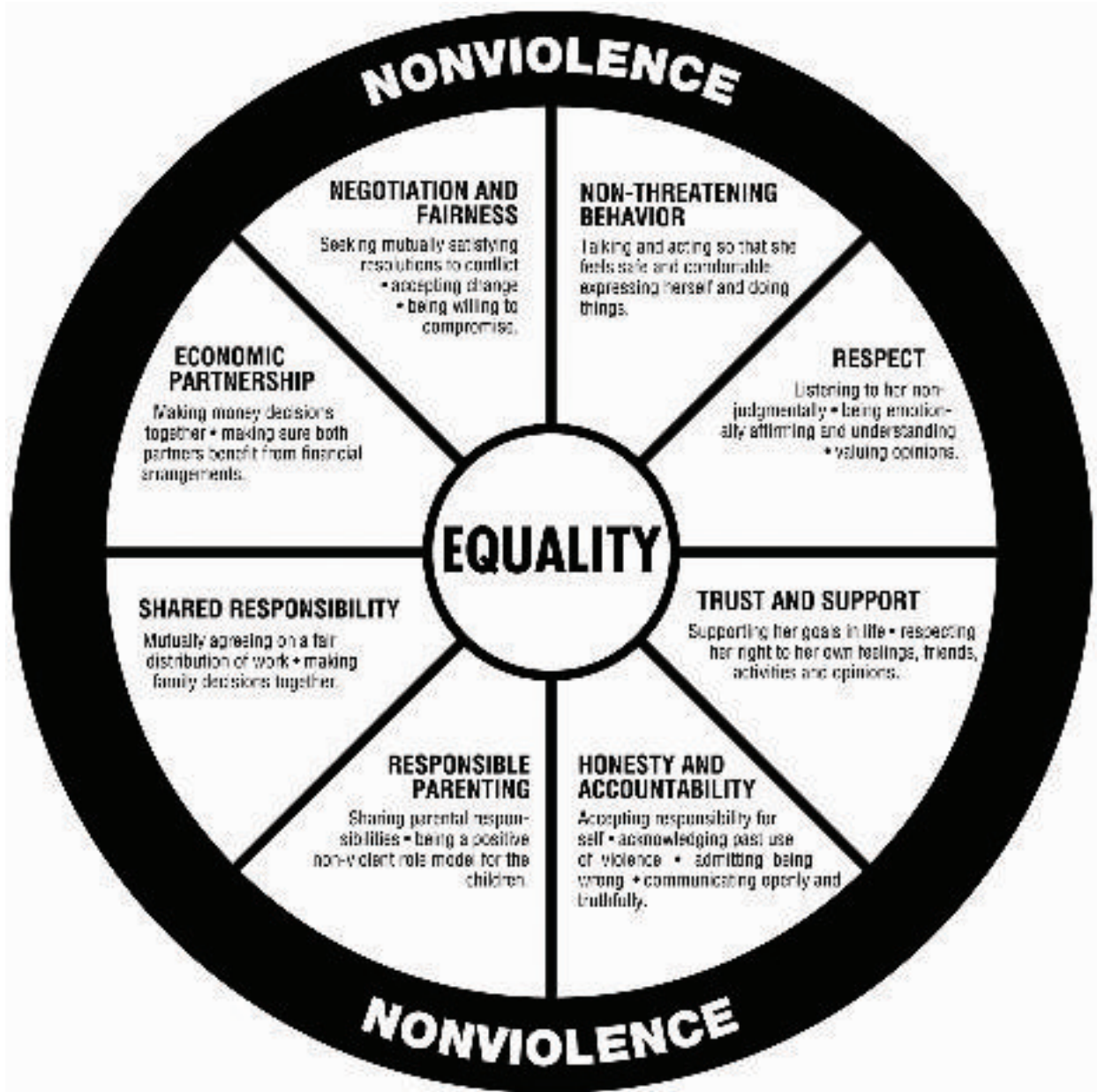


Developed by the *Domestic Abuse Intervention Project*, 202 E. Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802

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Equality Wheel

Equality is the opposite of power and control. This model, also from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, describes a healthy, equal relationship.



Developed by the *Domestic Abuse Intervention Project*, 202 E. Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802

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Results of the 2004 General Survey on Victimization¹⁰

This guide focuses on the effects on elementary school students when violence is perpetrated against their mothers by male partners. The results of the 2004 survey tell us a great deal about self-reported spousal violence against Canadian women.

Women continue to suffer more serious and repeated spousal violence than do men, and incur more serious consequences as a result of this violence:

- When looking at the most serious types of violence reported, a larger proportion of women reported being beaten, choked, threatened with a gun or knife, or had a gun or knife used against them by their intimate partner than were men (23% versus 15%).
- Women were also much more likely to report that they were the targets of more than ten violent incidents at the hands of their partner (21% versus 11%), and more likely to state that they were injured as a result of the violence (44% versus 18%).
- Female victims of spousal violence were three times more likely than male victims of spousal violence to fear for their life (34% versus 10%).
- Between 1974 and 2003, the rate of spousal homicide against females has typically been 4 to 5 times higher than the rate of male spousal homicide. (Note: While the proportion of spousal homicide against females compared to males has remained relatively stable, there has been a reduction in the rate of spousal homicides against both women and men.)
- Over half of the homicide-suicides involving family members were committed by male spouses or ex-spouses, and 97% of victims were female spouses (N=834). Three-quarters (76%) of all homicide-suicides between 1961 and 2003 involved family members.

The majority of victims of spousal violence do not call the police:

- Only 27% of victims of spousal violence reported the incident to police. In addition, a larger proportion of female victims of spousal violence reported the incidents to the police as compared to male victims (37% versus 17%).

Less than half of female victims turn to a formal help agency:

- About one-third (34%) of victims (47% of female victims and 20% of male victims) indicated that they had turned to a formal help agency because of the violence.

What Recent Surveys Tell Us about Children Exposed to Spousal Violence

Statistics Canada estimates that where there is spousal violence, children have seen violence or threats in 37% of households.¹²

About 70% of children who witnessed spousal violence saw or heard assaults against their mothers.¹³

About one-half of women who took their children to shelters in Canada did so to protect their children from witnessing the abuse of their mother; 39% did so to protect the child from psychological abuse, 18% from physical abuse, and 5% from sexual abuse.¹⁴



Impacts on Children and Adolescents

Watching, hearing, or learning later of a mother being abused by her partner threatens young people's sense of stability and security.

- Children and adolescents may experience increased emotional and behavioural difficulties.^{5, 15}
- Some young people display traumatic stress reactions (e.g., flashbacks, nightmares, intensified startle reactions, constant worry about possible danger).¹⁶
- Children and adolescents living with domestic violence are at increased risk of experiencing physical injury or childhood abuse (e.g., physical, emotional).^{6, 9}
- The abuser may use children and adolescents as a control tactic against adult victims.¹⁷ Examples include:
 - ⇒ claiming the children's bad behaviour is the reason for the assaults on their mother
 - ⇒ threatening violence against children and their pets in front of the victim
 - ⇒ holding the children hostage or abducting them in an effort to punish their mother or to gain compliance
 - ⇒ withholding children's health cards or other essential documents (e.g., birth certificate, passport)
 - ⇒ talking disrespectfully about their mother to the children
- Children and adolescents may experience strong mixed feelings toward their violent parent; affection exists along with feelings of resentment and disappointment.
- Young people may imitate and learn the attitudes and behaviours modelled when woman abuse occurs in the home.^{7, 8} They may:
 - ⇒ use violence and threats to get what they want;
 - ⇒ learn that people do not get in trouble when they hurt others;
 - ⇒ believe men are in charge and get to control women's lives;
 - ⇒ and believe that women don't have the right to be treated with respect.
- Exposure to violence may desensitize children and adolescents to aggressive behaviour. When desensitization occurs, aggression becomes part of the "norm" and is less likely to signal concern to young people.



Impacts on Children and Adolescents (continued)

Whatever a young person's cultural background, she or he is likely to experience similar feelings about living with woman abuse. However, some students may face additional barriers to seeking assistance because of differences from the dominant culture, such as:

- cultural and linguistic barriers
- the visibility of their mother's situation within their community
- distrust of adults in positions of authority (e.g., police)
- increased concerns about confidentiality
- increased isolation
- limited resources and supports
- racism
- discrimination
- lack of immigration status

Children and mothers living in rural or remote areas may experience additional challenges, such as:

- increased isolation and lack of social support networks
- difficulty accessing services due to lack of public transportation and long distances to travel
- the visibility of their situation within their community
- increased concerns about confidentiality

Barriers resulting from cultural differences may be compounded when students live in rural or remote areas.



Signs a Student is Having Difficulties

Students may display difficulties when they are living in abusive homes.¹⁸ These problems can occur for other reasons as well (e.g., death of a parent, homelessness, being bullied, traumatic events experienced by a refugee or immigrant, parental alcoholism). You may want to consult with other educators, the guidance counsellor, and/or administrative or support personnel to discuss your concerns.

Difficulties often include:

- physical complaints (headaches, stomachaches)
- tiredness
- constant worry about possible danger and/or safety of family members (e.g., going to check on sisters or brothers, phoning home)
- sadness and/or withdrawal from others and activities
- low self-esteem and lack of confidence, especially for trying new things (including academic tasks)
- difficulty paying attention in class, concentrating on work, and learning new information
- outbursts of anger directed toward educators, peers, or self
- bullying and/or aggression directed toward peers in and/or out of the classroom
- stereotyped beliefs about males as aggressors and females as victims

In addition to the behaviours listed above, older students may display:

- inflicted self-injury or mutilation
- suicidal thoughts and actions
- high risk behaviour (including criminal activities and alcohol and substance abuse)
- school truancy or leaving home
- dating violence



Potential Impacts at Different Ages¹⁹

Key Aspects of Development

Potential Impact of Woman Abuse

Preschoolers

Learn how to express aggression and anger, as well as other emotions, in appropriate ways.	⇒	Learn unhealthy ways of expressing anger and aggression; possibly confused by conflicting messages (e.g., what I see vs what I'm told).
Think in egocentric ways.	⇒	May attribute violence to something they have done.
Form ideas about gender roles based on social messages.	⇒	Learn gender roles associated with violence, victimization, and patriarchal ideology.
Increased physical independence (dressing self, etc.).	⇒	Instability may inhibit independence; may see regressive behaviours.

School-Aged Children (6 to 11 Years)

Increased emotional awareness of self and others.	⇒	More awareness of own reactions to violence at home and of impact on others (e.g., concerns about mother's safety, father being charged).
Increased complexity in thinking about right and wrong; emphasis on fairness and intent.	⇒	Possibly more susceptible to adopting rationalizations heard to justify violence (e.g., alcohol causes violence; victim deserved abuse).
Academic and social success at school has primary impact on self-concept.	⇒	Ability to learn may be decreased due to impact of violence (e.g., distracted); may not notice or may disregard positive statements or selectively attend to negatives or evoke negative feedback.
Increased same sex identification.	⇒	May learn gender roles associated with intimate partner abuse (e.g., males as abusers, females as victims).

Adolescents

Increased sense of self and autonomy from family.	⇒	Family skills for respectful communication and negotiation may be poorly developed; transition to adolescence may be more difficult for youth and family.
Physical changes brought on by puberty.	⇒	May try to physically stop violence; may use increased size to impose will with physical intimidation or aggression.
Increased peer group influence and desire for acceptance.	⇒	Possibly more embarrassed by violence at home; may try to escape violence by increasing time away from home; may use maladaptive coping to avoid violence (e.g., drugs).
Dating raises issues of sexuality, intimacy, relationship skills.	⇒	May have difficulty establishing healthy relationships; possibly at greater risk to becoming involved in dating violence (e.g., may see boys as abusers, gender role stereotypes).
Increased influence by media.	⇒	Possibly more influenced by negative media messages about violent behaviour, gender role stereotypes.



What Educators May See

The following actual case examples illustrate how living with violence can impact the lives of students.

Reaction to Police Officer

When a uniformed police officer drops in to say hello to the grade 1 teacher after dropping his son off at school, six-year-old Yazim gets under her desk and covers her face with her hands. Her teacher thinks Yazim's reaction might relate to her emigration experiences from her war-affected home country.

When the teacher bends down to talk with Yazim, large tears are flowing from her tense face. Yazim knows the visitor is a policeman. When asked why she is crying, Yazim asks if the policeman is going to take her away because her Mommy is hurt again. Yazim talks about her parents fighting and her worries. She believes her brothers will be sent back to their home country if her father goes to prison. She also worries there will be no one to look after the children if something happens to her mother.

Atypical Separation Anxiety

The grade 2 teacher recognizes Katie as needing more reassurance and physical attention than her classmates. Katie works hard every morning trying to get her mother to stay with her at school. In fact, the problem is escalating in frequency and intensity. Once Katie even followed her mother out of the school and ran down the road behind the car. At dismissal time, when Katie's mother comes to pick her up, Katie tries hard to get her mother to stay at school. She shows her mother drawings and other class work, and when her mother finally gets her outside, Katie tries to engage her to play with her on the climbers.

Background

Katie and her young mother were held at gun point by her stepfather for over three hours one night during the past summer. He debated aloud whether his partner would be punished more if he killed her or if he killed Katie. A traumatized Katie becomes anxious whenever separated from her mother or when faced with the need to return home. Home reminds Katie of this traumatic event and she overheard that her stepfather will be released from prison next month.



What Educators May See (continued)

Secrets Shared with Peers

Scott, age 8, is obviously distressed at dismissal time. His teacher questions him but he denies anything is wrong. What is different today, the teacher wonders? He was with his regular math buddy, Alex. Looking at their work, she observes that no progress was made on the project, which is unusual for Scott. The next day, she sees Scott and Alex in an emotional conversation at recess. The teacher knows Scott respects the physical education teacher, Mr. Green, and asks him to speak with Scott. Mr. Green talks with Scott the next day. Scott shares that something bad has happened in Alex's family. Scott hesitantly reveals that Alex's parents had a big fight and that Alex saw his father pull his mother down the stairs by her hair. Scott implores Mr. Green not to tell anyone about Alex's family. Scott explains that Alex's father will "kill" Alex for telling Scott, and that Alex will "kill" Scott for telling Mr. Green.

Fighting

Quyen, age nine, learned English quickly after arriving from his homeland three years ago. However, he is somewhat isolated in this school where there are few other newcomer children. He is shy with the Canadian boys, but tries hard to fit in. Nevertheless, when challenged in any way, Quyen lashes out in anger and usually ends up in the principal's office for fighting.

The principal schedules an appointment with Quyen's mother and arranges for an interpreter, who turns out to be a neighbour of the family. Quyen's mother has few English skills. Quyen's mother repeatedly insists that he is a good boy who is picked on by other students. The principal asks if Quyen's father ever uses physical violence that Quyen might see at home. When the interpreter asks the mother the question, there follows a lengthy exchange between them during which Quyen's mother seems anxious and upset. The interpreter answers the question: "My husband is a good man. He provides well for his family."



What Educators May See (continued)

Taking Off from School

Kevin, age 11, is referred for assessment by the school psychologist because of repeated absences from some classes. The referral letter queried whether Kevin is becoming school or “subject” avoidant. The school is particularly puzzled by the episodic nature of his truancy and the fact that he comes to school in the morning but runs away during morning recess.

During the second interview, Kevin discloses that his father is extremely violent and “beats Mom real bad.” Kevin explains that he has to be home some days to make sure his mother is okay. He describes staying outside his house and watching through the window, ready to intervene if his mother needs him.

Model Student

Maria, age 12, seems more mature than other students. She works hard to complete all assignments in school, even if that means staying after school to finish. She is captain of the volleyball team and the basketball team, president of the school council, and volunteers to help younger ESL students who also speak Spanish. She is admired by all, especially the younger students whom she protects from the school bullies. The teachers value Maria’s leadership qualities and the positive influence she has on her peers.

One day Maria asked her coach how she controlled her anger. Maria shared that she spent every day afraid of being like her father, wondering when “the ball of anger” inside her would explode and she’d lose it. Maria’s dad is abusive toward both her mother and her.



What Educators May See (continued)

Disrespectful Towards Adult Females

John, age 13, and his mother are talking with the school social service worker. His mother expresses concern regarding John's verbal disrespect for his female teachers. This is most evident when he is being reprimanded. He is also physically aggressive toward his mother if she enforces limits on his behaviour (e.g., curfew).

His mother is surprised by John's actions. She reports that John witnessed his father being violent toward her until he was 8 years old. She describes being very close to her son and proudly tells of a time when he attacked his father with a wooden spoon in an effort to stop him from choking her. She knows John hated his father's violent behaviour and is hurt and puzzled by John's aggression toward her and his teachers.

Dating Violence

After physical education class, the teacher asks to meet with Rosa and inquires about the vivid bruises on her upper arms. Rosa, age 14, describes a fall. After supportive challenges, Rosa admits that her boyfriend had grabbed her by the arm and pulled her away. She quickly explains it was her fault because she had been speaking to another boy who is a friend. When asked about her female friends, Rosa shares that she no longer sees them because she has to be home in case her boyfriend wants to see her.

Background

Rosa, age 14, grew up witnessing violence by her father against her mother and her sisters. Since coming to Canada, they have fled many times to the shelter for safety. She hates how her father treated them and is glad he no longer lives with them. However, she continues to fear that he will carry out his threats of killing her mother.



Some students may cope by intently focusing on academics, sports, or social activities. They describe blocking out the troubling events at home with life at school. These young people may appear as if they have not been affected by the domestic violence. It may be more accurate, however, to view them as children and adolescents working very hard to achieve success at school, because at home they experience a lack of control over troubling events with few opportunities to receive positive feedback.



Responding When Students Display Troubling Behaviours

These guidelines are helpful for educators dealing with troubling behaviours, regardless of whether woman abuse is a factor.

I. Remember that there may be a variety of reasons for the student's behaviour.

- Problems may be explained by a number of factors in the student's life. Exposure to woman abuse is only one possibility. Consider/explore other possible causes (e.g., terminal illness, death of a family member, homelessness, being bullied, settlement issues for immigrant and refugee families, parental alcoholism or substance abuse). (See case examples pp.20-21.)

II. Reassure students and increase their sense of security in school by:

- establishing simple rules and routines so they know what to expect
- giving straightforward explanations (where possible) for things that may worry them (e.g., sirens, presence of police in school, locked doors, security cameras)
- allowing students to express their concerns through talk, play, and written assignments

III. Consult with other educators, the guidance counsellor, and/or administrative or support personnel at your school.

- Consultation provides opportunities to obtain support, information about resources, and strategies for your classroom and elsewhere in the school (e.g., hallways, yard).
- In preparation for consulting with someone else, it may be helpful to:
 - ⇒ clarify your concern as it relates to the school and your responsibility to educate
 - ⇒ think about how you would describe the behaviour (e.g., What is the problem? When did it start? How often does it occur? Who is affected and in what ways? What has been tried and how did it work?)



Responding When Students Display Troubling Behaviours (continued)

IV. Remember that it is often not easy or safe to talk about family problems.

- Woman abuse and other family problems are often treated with great secrecy. Sometimes the secrecy is a way of maintaining safety (e.g., children may be fearful that threats of horrible consequences will be carried out if they tell someone about the abuse; mother may fear her abusive partner may harm or take the children if she tells someone about the abuse). By asking, you will let the family know that you are concerned and willing to help. They may choose to talk to you in the future if they experience violence or other problems that affect their child.

V. Talk to the student's parent.

- Express your concerns as they relate to the education of this student or others in a supportive and non-threatening manner.
- Ask the parent what she/he is noticing at home and whether she/he has any ideas about what might be contributing to the student's difficulty in school.
- Discuss possible ways to support the student (What can the parent do? What can you do?).

VI. Provide information on available resources.

- Offer information about resources in the community that might assist the student and his/her family (e.g., women's shelter, domestic violence agency, child trauma/treatment program, cultural-linguistic interpretation services). (See Resources, p.42).



We suggest that educators encourage parents to seek assistance for their child from a physician or other community support agencies when the child's behaviour:

- is physically harmful to the student or others (e.g., physically fighting with others, laying down on the street)
- is intense enough to interfere with the student's day-to-day adjustment in school
- does not respond to behaviour management strategies
- persists over time (3 to 6 weeks)

School educators often have a list of community support agencies available to them.



What Educators May See

The following case examples illustrate how similar behavioural presentations in the classroom may have different causes. Ahmed and Kala are both young children who seem extremely tired and preoccupied. As their stories reveal, their in-class behaviours are directly linked to different family circumstances.

Ahmed

Ahmed, age 8, has fallen asleep at his desk three times this week. He has dark circles under his eyes and frequently yawns. He seems to have difficulty attending to instructions and daydreams when he should be completing learning activities. At recess, he leaves his peers and goes to the area where his older sister Habiba, age 11, is playing.

Several times in the last few days, he has asked to go to the washroom during class and was later found standing outside his sister's classroom. He watches the clock closely and runs to his sister as soon as the bell rings.

When the teacher calls his parents, she reaches an aunt who reports these relatives no longer live with her. The family arrived as refugees from a war affected country six months ago, but left her home recently when a settlement agency arranged a new residence for them. The aunt has no idea where they are and seems angry at even being asked.

When the teacher speaks with Habiba, she learns that the aunt's report was not exactly true. Her mother had a big argument with the aunt over money and the family is now homeless.

Habiba explains that her father is in their home country trying to get entry to Canada and will be very angry at his sister when he hears what happened. The family slept at a noisy shelter for the last few nights, so she and Ahmed aren't getting much sleep. She added that Ahmed is afraid he won't find his mother after school but he knows that Habiba knows where the shelter is.



What Educators May See (continued)

Kala

Kala, age 6, has fallen asleep twice on her desk and once during circle. She appears very tired and tells the teacher she is very, very sleepy. Her attention span, relative to her classmates, is very short. She has begun asking the teacher if she can call her mommy, and frequently asks if she can go to the Kindergarten room to see her brother.

When the teacher asks what she wants to speak about with her mother, Kala replies, "Nothing, I just need to speak with her." The teacher calls Kala's mother to discuss her concerns about Kala's tiredness and pre-occupation with her mother and brother.

Kala's mother explains apologetically that there have been some loud arguments at home and that it is probably difficult for the children to sleep. The teacher indicates that Kala seems very worried about her mother and asks if she is okay. Kala's mother begins to cry and says that sometimes the arguing gets a bit rough, but her husband has promised to quit drinking.



Strategies for Supporting Students

Students exposed to violence at home may benefit from specific approaches and strategies. While these approaches benefit most students and are likely already being used to some degree in your classroom, they are especially helpful for students exposed to violence at home. (See Safety Planning for additional strategies.)

I. Create a safe and low-stress environment that promotes respect toward others.

- Establish an explicit norm against violence.
- Consistently enforce non-acceptance of violence.
- Teach and reward non-violent conflict-resolution and cooperation.
- Model nurturing, respectful behaviour and gender equality.
- Foster cooperation.
- Reduce competition.
- Avoid creating situations where students may be humiliated (e.g., peers picking teams).

II. Provide positive experiences and activities to promote security, self-esteem, and learning.

- Provide positive reinforcement for students' efforts.
- Provide opportunities for fun.
- Teach all students to recognize their strengths and focus on ensuring that all students experience success.
- Celebrate students' cultural and religious observances.

III. Let students know what to expect.

- Plan and prepare the students for visitors.
- Minimize last minute scheduling changes.
- Give advance notice of upcoming events.
- Give advance notice of upcoming lessons or activities that may touch on difficult experiences.



Strategies for Supporting Students (continued)

IV. Increase positive connections to school.

- Look for a match between the students' interests and/or strengths and the course (e.g., special project), school (e.g., assisting custodian), or extracurricular activity (e.g., club, sports).
- Encourage participation. Interact with the student from time to time to allow the student to talk about his/her involvement.
- Enlist peer (e.g., cross-age mentor, tutor) and adult (e.g., staff, volunteers) support to provide encouragement and support.
- Use celebrities students can identify with, who value education, as role models.

V. The following strategies may be particularly beneficial for students living with woman abuse who are experiencing tiredness, lack of confidence in learning, difficulty attending and concentrating, and disruptions in homework routines.

- Provide time during the school day for homework completion when the student may be more able to attend to and complete it.
- Use cooperative learning strategies that allow for more immediate feedback, occasions to share, and small group opportunities.
- Consider ways of physically setting up your classroom to take a variety of learning styles into account.
- Check often for understanding to see if what you are saying or modelling is being heard and understood.
- Repeat information in a calm manner.
- Allow students to use learning aids such as tape recorders, calculators, reference charts, and computers, as necessary.

VI. Take advantage of opportunities to teach students about healthy relationships, equality, and gender roles.



Strategies for Supporting Students (continued)

VII. Be aware that some activities or situations may remind students of troubling events associated with the violence in their homes, or violence or trauma in other contexts (e.g., community, another country).

- Examples of events or themes that may be difficult for children living with violence include:
 - ⇒ raised voices
 - ⇒ alcohol/drug prevention activities or presentations
 - ⇒ making something in class to give to a parent
 - ⇒ violence prevention education
 - ⇒ peer fights
- Affected students may display intensified regular behaviour or a change in behaviour such as withdrawing, appearing preoccupied, becoming agitated or distressed, or acting out. Strategies that may benefit these students include:
 - ⇒ inviting the student to assist with another task (e.g., giving out handouts)
 - ⇒ asking the student to run an errand (e.g., taking something to the office or library)
 - ⇒ talking with the student after class

“School served as my shelter from many storms... Educators opened doors to worlds for me that the rest of my life had slammed shut.”²⁰



Ways to Support a Student Who Makes a Disclosure

Educators may receive disclosures about violence in the home from students, but may feel they don't have the skills and comfort level needed to support these young people. The following guidelines are offered to enhance your ability to respond in ways that help students when disclosures occur.

To assist with later decision making and formal responses see *Guidelines for When a Parent Is a Victim of Woman Abuse*, p.28 and *Reporting to the Children's Aid Society*, p.29.

- I. Make sure you know and understand the limits of legislation and your own school board policies.**
- II. Allow the student to tell her/his story.**
 - It usually helps young people to talk with a trusted adult about the violence or troubling events in their lives.
- III. Do not pressure the student to talk.**
 - It is important to remember that your role is not to gather evidence or to investigate the situation. Your role is to listen and acknowledge the feelings the student is sharing.
- IV. Reassure the student.**
 - If students disclose a troubling incident or pattern at home directly to you, reassure them by validating their feelings (e.g., "Sounds like that was scary for you. Are you okay?"). Depending on the situation, it may also be helpful to let them know that you are glad they told you, that the violence is not their fault, and that no one should be hurt.
- V. Let the student know the limits of confidentiality.**
 - Inform students when you cannot keep information confidential (e.g., if a child is being abused; if someone plans to harm self or others). What you say will be influenced by the legislation in your jurisdiction and school policies. (See Appendices A and B.)



Ways to Support a Student Who Makes a Disclosure (continued)

VI. Inform the student of what you are going to do.

- Students are likely to feel relieved but vulnerable following a disclosure. The situation they are dealing with may also leave them feeling powerless. Letting students know what steps you are taking and when you will talk to them again can decrease their anxiety.
- Students may ask you not to say anything to anyone about what they have told you. It is important for you to explain your legal responsibilities and how you will carry them out. Let them know why, what, and when you need to tell an authority (e.g., CAS worker if a child under age 16 appears to be being abused; police officer if a child reports Dad bought a gun and is threatening to kill Mom when she comes home from work), as well as how that authority figure may respond (e.g., come to the school to interview the student).
- Educators are accessible, respected, and trusted adults. Students may be more comfortable and likely to talk with educators when concerns arise. Teachers can offer to be available if the students want to chat. Educators can play a role in helping students explore their options.

VII. Support the student in making choices whenever possible.

- Students do not have control over the troubling situation. You can increase their sense of control by offering them choices. For example, some students may want time away from the class immediately after making a disclosure (e.g., may prefer to sit in the library while waiting for CAS worker to arrive). Others may wish to re-join their class. Whenever possible, support the students' sense of what they need at this time, while preventing the development of self-defeating patterns (e.g., ongoing excused absences that impede academic achievement). Inform and consult with other educators, the guidance counsellor, and/or administrative support personnel.

VIII. Do not criticize or speak negatively about the abusive parent.

- Young people often have confused or mixed feelings about the abusive parent. They may hate the abuse but like the “fun” times they also share with the abusive parent. Children and adolescents can feel very angry at and loyal to a parent at the same time. If you judge or criticize the offending parent, feelings of loyalty and protectiveness toward the parent may cause the youth to feel that she/he cannot talk about the abuse.



Ways to Support a Student Who Makes a Disclosure (continued)

IX. Do not make commitments to the student that you cannot honour.

- Sometimes educators are so moved by a student's situation and want so much to protect and reassure the youth, they make statements that they cannot follow through on. Examples include comments such as: "I will keep you safe;" "I won't let him hurt your mother anymore;" "I won't tell anyone what you told me." While clearly well-intended, such commitments can diminish a student's trust in others when she/he discovers the statements are untrue. This may cause a young person to believe that no one can help and it is not worth telling anyone about the upsetting things happening at home.
- Listen to students; validate their feelings (e.g., "Sounds upsetting. Are you okay?"), reassure, let them know you are glad they told you, and let them know what you are going to do (e.g., explain how you will carry out your legal responsibilities, describe school supports).



The student may choose this time to disclose because changes in circumstances have tipped the balance so that the youth's typical coping strategies are strained. Respond supportively:

- listen
- validate feelings
- reassure
- inform

This may increase a student's sense of security and her/his willingness to share concerns or seek help in the future.



Guidelines for When a Parent is a Victim of Woman Abuse

You may be planning to talk to a mother about your concerns about her child's education and adjustment at school. During the parent-educator meeting, the mother may disclose situations at home where she or the children are being abused. If this occurs:

I. Share your concerns about the student.

- Talk to her about your concerns with respect to her child's education and adjustment at school.

II. Be supportive and provide information about community resources.

- The parent may feel overwhelmed and be worried about difficult situations that may result from a disclosure, including increased safety concerns (e.g., escalation of abusive behaviour if her disclosure is discovered by her partner; apprehension about Children's Aid Society involvement). (See Resources p.42.)

III. Encourage the mother to contact the local woman abuse program for support and help with planning for her safety.

- Provide the mother with contact phone numbers or information on additional safety measures (e.g., Assaulted Women's Helpline). Offer her the opportunity to call and provide a phone and privacy. If possible, follow up to see if she has made the connection.

IV. Reassure her that you will not speak with the alleged abuser about your concerns.

- Talking to the alleged abuser about your concerns may endanger the youth or the victimized parent. Your reassurance that you will not discuss issues related to violence with the abusive partner may relieve some of the concern the parent may be experiencing as a result of the disclosure.

V. Report to the Children's Aid Society (CAS).

- If the adult victim is suspected of maltreating the child (e.g., physical abuse), contact the CAS without discussing your duty to report with the mother. Otherwise, share your obligation by law to report.
- Review the school board's protocol around reporting abuse.
- See *Reporting to the Children's Aid Society*, p.29.



Reporting to the Children's Aid Society²¹

Children's Aid Societies are mandated to protect children at risk of harm.

I. We all have a legal obligation to report promptly to a Children's Aid Society (CAS) if we suspect a child under age 16 is or may be in need of protection from abuse or neglect.

- The Child & Family Services Act (CFSA) defines the term "child in need of protection;" it includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and risk of harm (see Appendix A p.44).
- According to the CFSA, a child is in need of protection if they are suffering emotional harm (i.e., unaddressed and serious levels of anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive, aggressive behaviour, or delayed development).

II. Who makes the referral?

- The **person who has the reasonable grounds to suspect** that a child is or may be in need of protection **must make the report** directly.
- Do **not** delegate this responsibility. Also, review and follow the protocol in your school board, including requirements to inform others such as the principal, superintendent, or director.

III. What if I am not sure?

- Your duty is to report **any** situation involving a child under 16 years where you have "reasonable grounds" to **suspect** physical and/or sexual and/or emotional abuse, and/or neglect, and/or risk of harm.
- "**Reasonable grounds**" are what an average person, given his or her training, background, and experience, exercising normal and honest judgment, would suspect.
- It is up to the skilled social workers at the CAS to evaluate each situation individually to determine if a child is in need of protection, and if so, how to best protect the child.



For more information, see *How and When to Report Abuse or Neglect* from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.
(www.oacas.org)



Reporting Guidelines

When making a report to the CAS, consider the following:

I. Before making the report:

- Let the youth or disclosing parent know of your reporting requirement, provide support, and address any concerns, especially those related to safety (e.g., “I know someone who can help you and your Mom. I’ll tell her.”).
- Inform the designated agency authority (usually an educator).
- Ensure you have up-to-date information about the student that the CAS worker will require (e.g., name, date of birth, address, parents’ names).

II. Making the report:

- Report disclosure information and any relevant background information (e.g., previous concerns by the school).
- Ask and record what the CAS will do and when.
- Record the date, time, and name of the CAS worker who received the report.
- Report the information in a way that encourages the CAS to consider abuse against the mother and encourage the safety of the mother in its investigation and report.

III. After making the report:

- Reassure the student and let her/him know what to expect (e.g., “Mary Green is going to come to visit you after lunch. She helps kids and their parents stay safe.”). Let the student know who will be present.
- Inform others according to school policy requirements (e.g., school staff involved with the child, the parent).
- Document the disclosure and your response according to school policy.
- If appropriate and in collaboration with the CAS, make a referral to the social service worker/guidance counsellor associated with your school for ongoing support/follow-up (may not be an available resource for many schools).



There may be situations in which you feel that your school policies and procedures could lead to increased risk for the child, the adult victim, you, or others. If this occurs, advise your principal immediately and seek consultation and direction from woman abuse agencies and the CAS in your area.



Safety Planning

Transportation Arrangements

- It is essential that you know **who can** pick up the student and **who can not**. In cases of woman abuse, there may be a restraining order or other court motion preventing an abusive partner from having access to the children. It is the custodial parent's responsibility to inform the school (usually the principal, who then informs the necessary staff members).
- Copies of court papers preventing access by a parent to the children must be on file at the school in order for school authorities to refuse to release children to the non-custodial parent's care. Abused women may be concerned about the safety of children who may be being abused and/or used by abusive partners to control the mother's behaviour (e.g., abductions; getting reports from the children on their mother's activities). Women may speak with their child's teacher about the necessity of not letting the abusive parent talk with or pick up the child. You may need to explain that court documents identifying which parent is the legal guardian and/or issues of access are required by the school, and direct the parent to the principal.
- Have a plan in the event that a parent who is not allowed attempts to pick up a student (e.g., who will stay with the student, who will call the police, who will explain to the parent that the police have been contacted).
- Depending on the risk, some children being transported from shelters may need to go into the school building until class begins. Educators can assist by coordinating where the child should go (e.g., library, classroom, office), providing an activity for the student (e.g., books to read, feeding the classroom pets, drawing), and ensuring age-appropriate monitoring/supervision has been arranged.



Court documents preventing access by a non-custodial parent must be on file at the school in order for school staff to refuse a parent's request to see or take his/her child. Discuss with your principal how to respect privacy, while ensuring that the contents of the documents inform critical decisions by regular and substitute staff. Your school board may have policies and procedures to address this issue.



Safety Planning (continued)

Handling parent-attended events where woman abuse is an issue:

- Focus on the student and the student's participation in the event.
- Review copies of legal documents that state changes in guardianship, custody, and access arrangements (e.g., custody and access agreement, restraining order). Check with your principal to see where these documents are stored (e.g. Ontario Student Record).
- Do not inadvertently blame either parent for whatever situation unfolds when talking with the student.
- Be aware of your attitudes and feelings toward each parent and the current situation. This will help to safeguard against your attitudes and feelings leading to unhelpful or unprofessional practice.
- Be prepared to be flexible to support solutions that maximize comfort and safety for students, their families, and staff (e.g., separate parent conferences with the father and the mother).
- Discuss with your principal the need to be prepared to make decisions about limiting access to school functions by a parent whose behaviour jeopardizes the safety and well-being of students and their educators. Talk to your principal about this before the situation arises.



What Educators May See

The following examples illustrate the challenges and potential solutions for two parent-attended events where woman abuse is an issue.

Phung and the School Concert

Twelve-year-old Phung Huynh is a gifted violinist who will perform two solos at the upcoming school concert. Two weeks before the concert, a teary Phung informs her music teacher that the concert is causing so much trouble at home she cannot perform. She explains, with embarrassment, that the court won't let her father be near her mother because he has hurt her in the past. Phung says her mother is too ashamed to talk about this with the teacher.

Out of loyalty to both parents, Phung thinks it is better if neither parent attends. This will only happen if she does not perform. The teacher asks if there is a court order preventing Mr. Huynh from seeing Phung or her sister Thanh (in Grade 4). Phung says no. She explains her father picks them up at school on Fridays and they go to his apartment for take-out food and a movie.

After discussing options, Phung thinks it might work if her father is allowed to attend the rehearsal performed for the younger students and if her mother goes to the concert. Phung agrees to have her teacher propose this arrangement to her mother. The teacher consults with the principal and learns Mrs. Huynh has given Mr. Huynh's contact information to the school for emergencies.

When called, Mrs. Huynh immediately says Mr. Huynh should attend the concert and that she did not want to be a bother. However, she agreed to attend the rehearsal and for Phung's father to go to the concert when she learned how important it is for Phung to have both parents hear her play.



What Educators May See (continued)

Mrs. Green's Parent-Teacher Meeting

When Mrs. Green phones to schedule a parent-teacher meeting, she is told by the teacher that her husband has already made an appointment for them. Mrs. Green swears and hangs up.

When the puzzled teacher consults the principal, she learns the parents are separated. When she calls to set up a new meeting time, Mrs. Green apologizes for her outburst, explaining that her abusive ex-husband continues to take every opportunity to control and intimidate her. By court order, he sees the children only if supervised by a third party. Mrs. Green reports that the court order does not prevent Mr. Green from attending parent-teacher meetings and she is happy he is finally taking an interest in his children's academic progress.

The teacher schedules a separate meeting for Mrs. Green on a different day. Mrs. Green expresses her appreciation. When Mr. Green attends the session, he is initially jovial but angers quickly when told his wife will not be joining them. He insists it is imperative they both hear the same feedback.

The teacher explains they will receive the same feedback because they will be discussing the written progress report. Mr. Green then asks for the date and time of his wife's meeting so he can attend with her. This information is not shared. Mr. Green storms out of the room without ever having discussed his child's progress.



School and Community Partnerships

Links between schools and other community agencies helping families experiencing woman abuse:

- Building relationships with shelters, legal advocacy programs, counselling services, settlement services, police services, and violence against women prevention agencies will be beneficial.
- These links help address gaps that can exist in the broader system and enable school personnel to provide accurate referral information to mothers about resources.
- Working relationships and protocols between schools and shelters will make consultation regarding the needs of the students easier (e.g., consideration for a modified education plan due to trauma; safety planning for before and after school). Personnel working at shelters are an excellent source of support, information, and advice.
- There are local coordinating committees or councils in many communities that focus on violence against women. These committees may offer opportunities for networking, and may have sub-committees focused on the needs of children and adolescents.

When students are living with their mother at a shelter:

Make necessary allowances around school assignments.

- It may be difficult to complete assignments because of circumstances at the shelter (e.g., lack of quiet space) and/or the student's emotional state. It may be helpful to reduce the length of assignments and to create opportunities to do assignments during class or outside of class hours (e.g., after school).

Cooperate with the safety plan that may have been developed in conjunction with their mother.

- Children and adolescents may have helped develop a plan that may include where they must go when transported to school (e.g., office or yard) and what to do if the abusive parent comes to the school. It is important for every staff member at the school to be aware of this plan. This may involve protocols established with the shelter and police for crisis situations (e.g., hostile parent without visitation rights demands to see the student). Typically, such protocols are established between the school board and the respective community agencies, and then communicated by principals to their staff teams.



School and Community Partnerships (continued)

Regularly review school policies and procedures in case a crisis situation occurs.

- Policies that include procedures for dealing with these difficult and distressing situations are helpful (e.g., Who will call the police? Who will stay with the student? Where will the student be taken until the police arrive?). The goal is to maximize the safety and minimize the emotional distress of all students, parent(s), staff members, and school visitors.

Community Responses

Community responses to woman abuse should:

- provide safety
- foster the emotional well-being of abused women and their children
- hold abusers accountable through legal sanctions and batterers' intervention programs
- provide a continuum of coordinated services that are accessible, regardless of a client's language and culture (e.g., cultural linguistic interpreters)
- promote prevention efforts (school programs, public awareness campaigns) as a long-term strategy for social change



School-Based Violence Prevention

While violence prevention benefits all students, it may be especially important for those exposed to violence. For example, a safe school environment may be a haven away from stressors at home.²³ Prevention curricula and programs should help students understand that violence against women is rooted in inequality, and address gender stereotypes. Educators play an important role in advocating for, implementing, and sustaining school-based violence prevention.²⁵

What can educators do?

- **Learn about violence in relationships, how it impacts students, and school-based prevention. For example:**
 - ⇒ Seek out professional development on topics such as children exposed to domestic violence, bullying, dating violence, and school-based prevention.
- **Continually work to develop inclusive school practices that promote students' sense of belonging and availability for learning. For example:**
 - ⇒ Model inclusiveness. Avoid stereotyping (e.g., gender, racial) and model equality.
 - ⇒ Provide sports activities for all students, not only for the few who make the school teams.
 - ⇒ Address “cool-kid cliques” or “gangs” that abuse and silence others (e.g., separate classes or lunch hours, cross-peer mentors/tutors).
 - ⇒ Develop strategies to engage and foster connections to the school for all students (e.g., academic, social, athletic).
- **Make violence prevention a priority in and out of your classroom. For example:**
 - ⇒ Consistently enforce and “bring to life” a school code of conduct that defines and promotes respectful behaviour, gender equality, and provides an explicit norm against violence.
 - ⇒ Establish peer mediation programs in which students learn to use conflict resolution skills in the halls and in the school yard.
 - ⇒ Model respectful strategies for classroom management.



School-Based Violence Prevention (continued)

- **Help plan and/or support special violence awareness events for students. These events name and define violence, as well as increase awareness about different types of violence and its impact on victims. For example:**
 - ⇒ Play an active role on the Safe Schools Committee.
 - ⇒ Assist in developing a comprehensive anti-bullying program.
 - ⇒ Organize a violence-prevention fair.
 - ⇒ Schedule theatre productions focused on violence prevention and debriefing sessions with older student facilitators.
 - ⇒ Some students may have strong reactions to violence-prevention initiatives and curricula. Prepare students in advance by introducing the topic and describing upcoming activities (e.g., give students permission to take care of themselves and discuss how to do this; remind students that they can touch base with you if they have any questions or concerns; explain plans for debriefing).
 - ⇒ Build in opportunities for students to debrief as a group (e.g., facilitated discussion) and individually, as requested or required (e.g., meeting with guidance counsellor or community-based service provider).
- **Learn to integrate anti-violence curriculum and/or anti-violence lessons into existing subject matter, without taking away from core academic learning. For example:**
 - ⇒ Plan a math lesson on gathering, graphing, and interpreting data that uses results of student surveys on bullying.
- **Learning about students' exposure to violence and being exposed to incidents of student violence can be stressful. It is important to develop strategies for coping with stress. For example:**
 - ⇒ Find opportunities to debrief.
 - ⇒ Develop supportive work environments that promote a balance between work and home.
 - ⇒ Identify and celebrate successes.



School-Based Violence Prevention (continued)

Examples of Resources

A School-Based Anti-Violence Program (ASAP)²⁶

Available through the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System in London, Ontario, Canada, this violence-prevention program encourages educators, parents, students, and community agencies to work together to create safe schools with zero tolerance for violence. There are program offerings for both elementary and secondary school children with appropriate curriculum and activities, as well as suggested resources. The program stresses the importance of educating teachers prior to embarking on prevention within the schools.

The Second Step²⁷

Developed in Seattle, Washington, this program teaches children problem-solving and coping skills. The goal of the program is to increase empathy, self-control, anger awareness and management, and non-violent conflict resolution and problem solving.

My Family and Me: Violence Free²⁸

This elementary school curriculum, developed by the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, labels different kinds of family violence and its effects, teaches children how to develop safety plans, increases awareness of the benefits of respect, equality, and sharing power, encourages assertiveness and problem-solving skills, and helps children learn how to affirm their own self-worth.

The Fourth “R”^{29,30}

The *Fourth R* is a comprehensive school-based prevention program for adolescent risk behaviours. The foundation is a 21-lesson skill-based curriculum that promotes healthy relationships and targets violence (bullying, peer and dating violence), high risk sexual behaviour, and substance use among adolescents. The contention of the *Fourth R* is that relationship skills can be taught in the same way as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Furthermore, given the plethora of negative relationship models available to teens, it is crucial that adolescents be exposed to healthy alternatives, and equipped with the skills to engage in healthy relationships themselves. The *Fourth R* is comprised of three units: Personal Safety and Injury Prevention (peer and dating violence/bullying prevention), Healthy Growth and Sexuality, and Substance Use/Abuse. Each unit contains similar themes of value clarification, provision of information, decision making, and an extensive skill development component. Furthermore, connections among the three units are emphasized throughout.



Resources that Promote Healthy Equal Relationships

White Ribbon Campaign in a Box

Fully interactive exercises designed to help teach and promote healthy, equal relationships among boys and girls. Meets Ontario curriculum expectations and is specifically formulated for use in grades 5 – 8. Order Campaign in a Box at: www.whiteribbon.com or 1-800-328-2228. (English only) Guidance provided by the Faculties of Education and the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

RePlay Video Games

Youth aged 8-14 years can learn how to challenge behaviours and attitudes as part of this online game about healthy relationships based on equality and respect. Resource booklets for youth, educators and parents accompany the video games. Package also includes research on best practices and Ontario youth preferences for video game design. (English only) More details are available at www.metrac.org. Developed by Metrac with guidance provided by the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Tools for Change Educator's Website

A comprehensive listing of resources that promote healthy, equal relationships, reviewed and critiqued using a strengths-based model and matched to grade levels (3 -9) and the Ontario curriculum. A pedagogical review will help educators choose resources for their own teaching style. Available at www.toolsforchange.ca. (English only) Developed by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children with guidance provided by the Faculty of Education and local Public and Catholic school boards.

Equal Relationships Teachers' Kit

Teacher workshops, interactive resource materials, and opportunities for youth to produce their own resources are just some of the elements of this comprehensive kit to promote respectful, healthy equal relationships in grades 3-5. The project also has resources on girls' conferences, tip sheets in multiple languages and curriculum materials. A newsletter on prevention will highlight current initiatives and resources. Call Springtide Resources at: 416-968-3422 or visit www.springtideresources.org. (English only) Partners include the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

EqualityRules.ca

On this fully bilingual and accessible website, youth aged 8- 14 years, will learn skills needed to develop healthy equal relationships, and to recognize negative behaviours and attitudes that perpetuate violence against girls. The website also provides information on where to go for help. Go to www.equalityrules.ca or call the Ontario Women's Directorate at 416-314-0300.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Important numbers and information to share with older students or parents as needed

Fill in the contact numbers for your community:

Women's Shelter _____

Woman Abuse Agency _____

Family Counselling Agency _____

Child Protection Services _____

Victim/Witness Program _____

Hospital _____

Police _____

Cultural-Linguistic Interpretation Services _____

Legal Aid _____

Settlement Agency _____

Batterers' Intervention Program _____

Child/Adolescent Trauma/Treatment Program _____

For immediate assistance in an emergency, call the police.*
In many areas of Ontario, call 911 for emergency assistance.

For immediate assistance in an emergency or crisis situation:

- Tell operator the problem and give your full name and the address where the emergency is taking place.
- Do not hang up the phone until the operator tells you to.

Other helpful numbers:

Assaulted Women's Helpline* 1-866-868-0511

1-866-863-7868 TTY

Kids Phone Helpline* 1-800-668-6868

*Assures anonymity and confidentiality to callers

RESOURCES

Visit the following websites for additional information on woman abuse, including impacts, getting assistance, resources, prevention, and training. The websites for these organizations contain links to other valuable resources.

Aboriginal Healing & Wellness Program (AHWS)

www.ahwsontario.ca

An initiative of the government of Ontario, this program supports a comprehensive approach to reducing family violence and improving the health of people who live on or off reserves. The program integrates traditional Aboriginal teachings and mainstream health services and interventions.

British Columbia Institute Against Family Violence

www.bcifv.org

This non-profit agency is designed to support, coordinate, and initiate research and education programs to promote the elimination of violence in families.

Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System

www.lfcc.on.ca

A non-profit social service agency with six clinical programs, this agency also undertakes applied research, training, and resource development. The Centre is known around the world for its work on children exposed to domestic violence.

Centres for Research on Violence Against Women & Children in Canada

A group of five centres representing each region of Canada, this organization was originally funded by Health Canada. Each centre is now self-supporting.

1. Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children (Ontario)

www.crvawc.ca

2. CRI-VIFF: Le Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la violence familiale et la violence faite aux femmes (Quebec)

www.criviff.qc.ca

3. Feminist Research, Education, Development and Action Centre (FREDA) (British Columbia)

www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda/

4. Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (New Brunswick)

www.unbf.ca/arts/CFVR/

RESOURCES (continued)

5. RESOLVE (Research & Education for Solutions to Violence & Abuse)

www.umanitoba.ca/resolve/

Metrac (Metro Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children)

www.metrac.org

This community-based organization educates the public, professionals, and public officials on the root causes of violence against women and children in Toronto, and suggests appropriate solutions.

National Aboriginal Circle against Family Violence

www.nacafv.ca

A national organization with broad membership from Aboriginal communities and groups, this organization is mandated to conduct advocacy, help design culturally sensitive programs, conduct research and share best practices, and promote public awareness, among other tasks.

Ontario Women's Directorate

www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd

As a division in the government of Ontario, the OWD provides focus for government action on issues of concern to women; in particular, preventing violence against women and promoting women's economic independence.

Ontario Women's Justice Network

www.owjn.org

An online legal resource for women's organizations and individuals working on issues related to justice and violence against women and children, this resource is designed to demystify the legal system.

Shelternet Canada

www.shelternet.ca

This online resource for women and shelters provides reliable information in ten languages on topics such as: understanding abuse, finding shelter, impacts on children, making safety plans, and hiding Internet activities.

Springtide Resources: Ending Violence Against Women

www.springtideresources.org

This agency informs and educates the community about woman abuse. The agency's goal is to decrease the incidence of physical, psychological, emotional, and sexual violence against women and the effect this has on children.

White Ribbon Campaign

www.whiteribbon.ca

This campaign involves men working to end men's violence against women by encouraging personal and collective action among men. It undertakes education in schools, workplaces, and communities, raises funds to support women's groups, and speaks out on issues of public policy.

APPENDIX A: CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT²²

Excerpt from: Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect It's Your Duty. Ministry of Children and Youth Services. © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2005. ISBN 0-7794-7559-3.

Online at: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/NR/CS/Publications/AbuseNeglect-en.pdf>

Section 72. (1) of the Child and Family Services Act

Despite the provisions of any other Act, if a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect one of the following, the person shall forthwith report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a society:

1. The child has suffered physical harm, inflicted by the person having charge of the child or caused by or resulting from that person's,
 - i. failure to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child, or
 - ii. pattern of neglect in caring for, providing for, supervising or protecting the child.
2. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer physical harm inflicted by the person having charge of the child or caused by or resulting from that person's,
 - i. failure to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child, or
 - ii. pattern of neglect in caring for, providing for, supervising or protecting the child.
3. The child has been sexually molested or sexually exploited, by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual molestation or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child.
4. There is a risk that the child is likely to be sexually molested or sexually exploited as described in paragraph 3.
5. The child requires medical treatment to cure, prevent or alleviate physical harm or suffering and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, the treatment.
6. The child has suffered emotional harm, demonstrated by serious
 - i. anxiety,
 - ii. depression,
 - iii. withdrawal,
 - iv. self-destructive or aggressive behaviour, or
 - v. delayed development,and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the emotional harm suffered by the child results from the actions, failure to act or pattern of neglect on the part of the child's parent or the person having charge of the child.
7. The child has suffered emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph i, ii, iii, iv or v of paragraph 6 and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, services or treatment to remedy or alleviate the harm.

APPENDIX A: CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT²² continued

8. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph i, ii, iii, iv or v of paragraph 6 resulting from the actions, failure to act or pattern of neglect on the part of the child's parent or the person having charge of the child.
9. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph i, ii, iii, iv or v of paragraph 6 and that the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, services or treatment to prevent the harm.
10. The child suffers from a mental, emotional or developmental condition that, if not remedied, could seriously impair the child's development and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, treatment to remedy or alleviate the condition.
11. The child has been abandoned, the child's parent has died or is unavailable to exercise his or her custodial rights over the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care and custody, or the child is in a residential placement and the parent refuses or is unable or unwilling to resume the child's care and custody.
12. The child is less than 12 years old and has killed or seriously injured another person or caused serious damage to another person's property, services or treatment are necessary to prevent a recurrence and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide, or refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, those services or treatment.
13. The child is less than 12 years old and has on more than one occasion injured another person or caused loss or damage to another person's property, with the encouragement of the person having charge of the child or because of that person's failure or inability to supervise the child adequately.

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The website (<http://www.oct.ca/standards>) for the Ontario College of Educators posts the Standards that establish the foundations for the self-regulation of the teaching profession in Ontario. The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* outline 12 key statements describing the responsibilities all members of the College have as educators. The fourth statement relates to issues of confidentiality:

Members of the Ontario College of Educators in their positions of trust and influence:

- *Respect confidential information about students unless disclosure is required by law or personal safety is at risk*

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For more information on this training program, visit www.curriculum.org/womanabuse

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