



NETWORK NEWS

Provincial Coordinator Update

At last, Spring has arrived (*almost!*) What a winter.

APRIL 2008

Forensic Nurses

This has been an exciting year for forensic nurses in Canada. We were accepted as an emerging interest group of the Canadian Nurses Association! Our official name is the **Forensic Nurses' Society of Canada** (www.forensicnurse.ca). We held our first *Annual General Meeting* on March 6th to update members on our progress to date and the work that lies ahead. We have approved our Bylaws, and are establishing a process for Board elections that will take place in the Fall of 2008. Please join our effort to develop the role of forensic nursing in Canada. Information is available on the website.

Forum & Expo

In January, we participated at the Women's Health Matters Forum and Expo in Toronto. This event was attended by over 12,000 people. In addition to our exhibit booth, Tatjana Singer and Anne Paré from the Scarborough Grace SA/DVTC program presented a session titled, '*Sugar & Spice & Things Not So Nice*'. This session on dating violence was directed to adolescents. The presentation was well received and the evaluations were outstanding! Tatjana and Anne are willing to share what they did, and you can contact them at the Scarborough Grace. Well done!

Training

We are making great strides in the development of our nursing orientation and SANE training online program. Our HIV PEP online training will be available in April 2008 and can be accessed via our website: www.satcontario.com

DFSA

The *preliminary* results of the DFSA study are being presented this week at our Annual Conference in Sudbury. We have a wealth of data to analyze so final results are a few months away. The *client evaluation study* is making slow progress. We are currently going through a peer review process which ultimately will strengthen our Ethics application at your hospital.

Research Update

One of our goals as a Network of SA/DVTC programs is to participate in research activities that will assist us in strengthening our services. These activities can include conducting studies and/or utilizing existing research findings and evaluative strategies. To assist us in achieving this goal, we have hired, part-time, Dr. Janice DuMont to be a research consultant to the Network. Janice works at the Women's College Research Institute. You probably already know Janice, given her previous work with us. She was a co-Investigator on the *HIV PEP study*, is co-Principal Investigator on the *DFSA study*, and is Principal Investigator for the *client evaluation study*. She has published extensively on sexual assault and its interface with the criminal justice system. She has also consulted to the World Health Organization.

HIGHLIGHTS

New Model in Progress
Importance of 'Team'
Restructuring Recovery
Using Radio PSAs
Creative Outreach

Sheila Macdonald R.N.
Provincial Coordinator

ONE STOP CARE...

New Model in Progress

In the summer of 2002, the little house that contained our administrative and counselling offices was razed to make room for a much needed parking lot for St. Mary's General Hospital. Except for our acute facility in the hospital, we were homeless and began a search. After reviewing a few possibilities, our hospital - with our Centre's recommendation - negotiated rental space in the new building for the Catholic Family Counselling Centre and we've been here ever since. Our space includes two administrative offices, an office for outreach and follow-up HIV PEP, and a social work office for follow-up counselling.

In 2006, the Regional Police initiated a specialized team referred to as the Domestic Violence Investigative Unit. We tossed around the idea of having the DVIU also at the counselling centre and encouraging other services to move it as well - similar to the San Diego model - and so it happened. The DVIU and their Victim Services Unit moved in and since then, other services have joined them, all located, along with us, on the second floor of the building. All pay rent and are accountable to their respective agency/funding body/Ministry. They include: the Elder Abuse Response Team, outreach workers from Women's Crisis Services, an assistant crown attorney, intake workers from the newly developed Family Violence Team at Family and Children's Services, and a worker from the Victim/Witness Assistance Program.

Also in 2006, Catholic Family Counselling secured funding from the Ministry of the Attorney General for a coordinator of what we refer to as, the *Family Violence Project*. Since then, member services have developed mission, vision, values and belief statements and we meet on a regular basis.

Now, a woman that accesses our Team of nurses and social workers through the Emergency Department of the hospitals will find it somewhat easier to access *other* related services. Our Team members are more familiar with those other services, and the people working *in* the services, and what they can offer women. As well, the other services are much more familiar with *our* Team members and the services *we* provide, in order to refer women to our on-call Team, or refer to a Team social worker for short term counselling. With the proximity of the services, all under one roof, women who come to us for short term counseling can be introduced to the other services they consent to, with a walk down the hall and an introduction, say, to an outreach worker from the shelter, a detective with the DVIU, etc. Feedback from women has been very positive. Comments such as: "*It felt like a blanket of people protecting me and my children*" are common.

**Casey Cruikshank, Director
Kitchener SA/DVTC**

Importance of 'Team'

... CENTRE FOCUS

Wikipedia describes 'Team' as:

'A group of people or animals linked in a common purpose...especially appropriate for conducting tasks high in complexity and with many interdependent subtasks.'

'A group in itself does not necessarily constitute a team. Teams normally have members with complementary skills and generate synergy through a coordinated effort which allows each member to maximize his or her strengths and minimize his or her weaknesses.'

While I have had the fortune of working within some good groups, I would like to pay homage to the wonderful women and the man with whom I currently work.

Our Team functions under the leadership of our coordinator, Gerry Bryan, our director, Karen Dyer, and our medical director, Susan McNair. These individuals use their knowledge, skills, and energy to ensure that we have the resources we need to do our work - not an easy task in these days of fiscal restraints and human resource challenges. They lead by example, always honest, accountable, and dedicated.

Our secretary Tammy Heggart directs the traffic in our office, keeping our work schedules organized, our clients informed, and our candy bowl full! She is truly the hub of the office and we would be lost without her. Our program nurse Judi Tapp, and the on-call team of registered nurses and examiners, are the first point of contact for our clients. Without fail, their kindness, compassion, and dedication to this work shine through. Linda Fischer is our program social worker. She is a truly skilled and passionate woman who cares deeply for our clients, our Team, and our work. She is like the mother in our Team - tending to us as individuals and as a collective 'family'. Her thoughtful gentle approach and her humor have brightened many a dark day.

As individuals, we each have our strengths, our expertise, and our challenges. As a group, we are a synergistic force, pulling when we need a pull, pushing when that's necessary. We help each other through crises, we laugh and learn together. We grow. We hold each other in our heart's space.

I think this work draws individuals of a special spirit. I see this time and time again at conferences and meetings. I see this every day when I come to work. To all of us, and especially to my Team, *thank-you for being there!*

**Cheryl Marks, SANE
London SA/DVTC**

SUCCESSFUL CHANGE...

Recovery After Restructuring

Nina's Place, the Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Care Centre of Halton, went through an adjustment in leadership last year, by a change in the manager of 4 years. Nina's Place is aware that other Centres have gone through similar changes. The process our Team went through moved from challenging and painful, to hopeful and inspiring. We are sharing some of what we learned in the process in order to help our sister Centres who may be in a similar situation.

Transition, change and adjustment are all normal parts of our lives. However, when they occur in a work context, particularly in work that is as specialized as ours, it can be quite difficult to manage. Our Centres are unique in their structure and leadership – it is often the case that a great deal of information lies in the hands of very few people, or in some cases only one person. From this perspective, when change does occur it's difficult to adjust. There's a vacuum created from a lack of information. In our case, Team members didn't understand the role of the Network, the protected nature of the program, funding issues, the 'big picture' of the program in terms of community support and involvement, or even how they were able to do their jobs independently. Because of this lack of understanding, many Team members feared the program would be closed when the leadership changed. Many people were also very concerned with how they'd be supported in their roles without the same leadership.

Firstly, the Team quickly learned the importance of sharing information in a comprehensive way. Team meetings became more interactive, and people were educated regarding the why's and how's of their on-call positions, rather than just the mechanics of their roles. The Team decided to build strength within each of the members by working from an empowerment model. People were asked what would make them feel confident in their roles. They were also invited into problem-solving, decision-making, and to broadening their roles by being more involved in follow-up visits with patients, and outreach events.

As with all change and transitions, some people cannot manage and are lost to the Team in the process. Those who remain have core values in common – a passion and commitment to the issues of domestic violence and to providing excellence in care to our patients. After all, we are a unique group of people whose passion for the issues of violence against women has brought us to this field, and those values are ones we need to keep in the forefront. That shared knowledge and understanding bound our Team even in a time of great change.

**Tamara Vukelic, Social Worker
Burlington SA/DVCC**

Stepping Up Awareness

... RADIO PSAs

This year the Pediatric Sexual Assault Care Team of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) decided to promote its services to our community by using radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs), as they are both affordable and expansive. Radio is the most portable and most available form of media. It can be with you in any room in the house, in the car, when you're walking, jogging or biking, when you're boating or just lying on a beach - *and* at any time of the day or night. Each radio station also broadcasts to a large portion of our catchment area.

We chose to do a year round campaign of 4 radio PSAs to cover all age groups of children and youth we care for. We started off with a general PSA to let people know that CHEO does care for children and youth who have been recently sexually assaulted, and it's running through April which is *Child Sexual Assault Prevention* month, and May which is *Sexual Assault Prevention* month. So far we have had good support by local radio stations - 8 of 13 are playing our PSAs. Our next PSA will focus on pre-school toddlers, the one after that on public school age children, and the fourth one on teenage youth.

We are looking forward to caring for more children and youth who may not have known about us, and need our services!

**Brigitte Richard, Team Leader
Ottawa CHEO PSA**

In the News...

(March 7, 2008) The *Edmonton Domestic Violence Centre Initiative* receives Federal support of \$1.1 million over 3 years and \$6.6 million from other funders. The *Centre* is a collaborative initiative with Catholic Social Services, the Edmonton Police Services and six other community partners. This project will touch the lives of women who are often marginalized - the Centre is expected to assist 3,000 Aboriginal and immigrant girls and women annually. This is the second project approved under the *Women's Partnership Fund* of the *Women's Program of Status of Women Canada*. The Fund supports collaborative projects with eligible non-governmental organizations in partnership with public institutions and other levels of government.

Reaching Out

... CREATIVE CONTACT

What an amazing start to 2008! We've participated in social forums, facilitated several workshops, designed a new program for teens, and - for the first time at our Centre - we're supervising a University of Toronto Masters of Social Work student, Amanda Wong.

First, 2 Team members attended the *Women's Health Forum* on January 18th. Anne Paré and Tatjana Singer presented a workshop entitled '*Sugar and Spice and Things Not So Nice*' which was well received by an audience of over 30 delegates. Immediately prior to this, Tatjana Singer was interviewed on CBC's radio program '*Here and Now*'. She discussed work being undertaken by our Centre, as well as our workshop and its critical importance in assisting teens to understand what constitutes a healthy relationship.

Also at the *Women's Health Forum*, we had a well attended booth promoting our Centre and its initiatives. The popularity of this outreach was enhanced by an on-site program that tested delegates' knowledge of sexual assault, thanks to our craftily designed '*Wheel of Myths and Facts*'. When the Wheel is brought out, it's a guarantee of fun and learning for attendees who choose to participate. Credit for the success of our booth at the WHF rests with the hosts: our student, Amanda Wong, and our manager, Shirley Broekstra. In addition to the *Women's Health Forum*, our booth at the *Safe Schools Conference* generated significant interest among both principals and teachers.

Our Centre continued its outreach to elementary and high school students through our '*Healthy Relationships*' workshops. Since the start of the school year, Rahel-Leigh Peckett, Anne Paré, Amanda Wong, and Tatjana Singer provided 3 workshops to 3 different schools. It's our belief that we'll have an even greater opportunity to reach out to more schools during the next school year, based on the reception we received at the *Safe Schools Conference*.

Other things on the go include Amanda's '*Lunch and Learn*' sessions for hospital staff on '*Women Who Survive Domestic Violence and The Role that Legal Aid Can Play in their Lives*' and '*Women and Shelter Life*'. This program is designed to give hospital staff a deeper understanding of what it's like for women in the shelter system, and some knowledge of certain legal aid tools that might ameliorate these circumstances. As well, Anne Paré continues to use her expertise and teaching skills by providing workshops to members of the Metro Toronto Police Department in order to inform and guide their interactions with women who are survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.

More recently, the Team created a new workshop entitled '*Words: His, Hers and the Other*'. It's designed to engage participants in a variety of brainstorming activities and cooperative activities to highlight societal views of gender and gender relationships. Simply put: another medium enabling us to be proactive in our community and to highlight what constitutes a positive relationship.

**Tatjana Singer, Social Worker
Scarborough SA/DVTC**

"This world has got to wake up. To me, if there is domestic violence, if the children see or hear it, that to me is detrimental."

Denise Brown (sister to Nichole Brown Simpson)

WE WELCOME YOUR INPUT!

We invite you to share:

- Articles
 - Updates
 - Questions
 - Successes
 - Comments
 - Challenges
 - Information
- Etcetera*

Please submit via email in a Word document to:

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and

Cynthia P. Colby, *Editor*
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Upcoming Events

Current Issues in Child Maltreatment Conference

June 2-3, 2008

The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto

Contact: Nicole.winters@sickkids.ca or (418) 813-8122

International Association of Forensic Nurses Scientific Assembly

September 17-20, 2008

Dallas, Texas

Contact: www.iafn.org