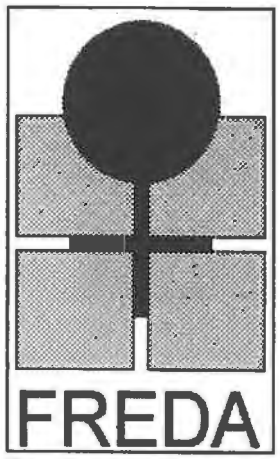
Feminist Research, Education, Development & Action



A YUKON PILOT PROJECT ON MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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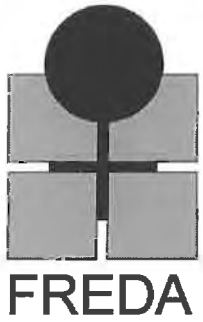

Feminist Research, Education, Development & Action Centre

The Feminist Research, Education, Development and Action (FREDA) Centre is one of five violence research centres funded by Health Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Since its inception in 1992, the FREDA Centre has worked with over seventeen different groups in British Columbia on various aspects of violence against women and children. The Centre has also published a report dealing with violence against women in the Yukon.

FREDA is a collaboration of community groups, and feminist academics from Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. The Centre's mandate is to undertake and promote action-based research on violence against women and children. As well, the FREDA Centre works with community groups to forward recommendations for action to relevant policy makers and mandated agencies.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & CHILDREN IN THE YUKON

A common perception exists that violence against women and children in the North is more wide spread, of a more serious nature, and more difficult to address than the violence encountered in southern urban areas. Shelter workers and feminist organizers in the Yukon increasingly talk this way among ourselves, but we are careful as our southern sisters are to avoid making public statements that would encourage this belief. After all, it is still thought to be of critical political importance to avoid any suggestion that particular regions, cultures, races or classes experience a greater problem with men's violence against women and children. And from long experience we know the risks of linking certain demographic factors with a higher incidence of rape or battering. Dominant interests can seize on whatever information we make available in order to divert attention away from the controlling and violent behavior of white middle class men by targeting disadvantaged groups.

In the Yukon, where the impacts of racism are a matter of daily life for so many, it is perhaps little wonder that shelter workers, without reference to feminist thought or analysis, seem to know intuitively that accurate statistics on the heritage of residences should never be made available for public scrutiny. Staff and directors at Kaushee's Place, myself included, have always maintained the politically correct position, asserting that wife battering occurs with equal frequency in all classes, cultures, and areas of Canada. We began to believe differently at least a decade ago, but feat of fostering bigoted and racist attitudes have muted even our internal discussion of what we've suspected, seen and learned through our lives and work in the North.

At least 80% of First Nations women have been sexually abused as children. I have heard this figure bandied abut by numerous front-line workers in the Yukon and elsewhere. No one seems to know precisely where it originated, or if there are actual studies to support the assertion. None-the-less, it is generally accepted as a reasonably accurate estimate of the extent of abuse in Northern rural communities, and within the Yukon as well. Most of these communities, are predominantly Aboriginal. Many accept that the correct figure is in fact much higher.

Recently, we were party to a discussion by four prominent Aboriginal women from different communities in the Yukon. They began talking about abuse in their lives and it was soon revealed that not only had they all been sexually abused as children and all by multiple offenders, but no one could think of a single women they'd grown up with who had escaped the same fate. It is this kind of anecdotal evidence, gleaned from discussions with friends, colleagues, and service users, that has formed our sense of the staggering dimensions of violence against women and children in the Yukon.

A Gwitchen women with whom I worked claimed that the level and scope of the violence increased the further you went North. She had lived in Inuvik and Aklavik, just across the border into the N.W.T. She had countless stories of savage gang rapes, beatings, and even murders that were never dealt with by

authorities. She could name the particular families and individual men whose violence, sadism, and control of certain communities were legend, and continue virtually unchecked. She spoke of the hopelessness of women who saw no possibility of escape from the ongoing torment and abuse that defined their lives and the lives of their children. There are no services for them to access, and no place to turn for help.

For most Aboriginal women living further north, the prospect of leaving for a place like Whitehorse is every bit as daunting as an unescorted trip to Manhattan would be for a rural white Albertan. In the Yukon, Whitehorse is the South. It is as different from Old Crow or Aklavik, as Los Angeles is from Whitehorse. Few Northern Yukon women or rural women make their way to Kaushee's Place or the Dawson Shelter. The wonder is that anyone ever makes it there at all.

In Whitehorse, the local First Nation is Kwanlin Dun. The Chief and Council are still engaged in land claims negotiations. There is a sense of urgency driving the development of social programs and an effective Tribal Justice System. There is much which needs to be accomplished before the advent of self-government. Alcoholism, unemployment and violence are the biggest social problems facing Kwanlin Dun and most other First Nations in the Yukon. Most Aboriginal People, and many non-Aboriginals, have come to regard these social ills as the direct legacy of racism, residential schools, and cultural breakdown. All just examples of the numerous ways in which white oppression has been played out in the North.

Men's violence against women and children is viewed differently here: by domestic violence workers; by workers in the shelters; by other agencies in the Yukon. Male offenders, like everyone else in the community are seen to be in need of healing and are more apt to be supported and defended as victims themselves, than condemned for the violence and abuse they perpetuate. This action (or inaction), constitutes the biggest challenge to understanding and co-operation between First Nation women and community development workers, and non-Aboriginal service providers who tend to operate from a feminist perspective.

For example, as a member of the Territorial Social Services Advisory Council, I have observed that the member from Kwanlin Dun, who is the coordinator of their developing Tribal Justice system, often provides insight on the progress of Circle Sentencing within the Kwanlin Dun community. They have not begun addressing the issue of sexual abuse and wife battering, although they recognize these issues as problems that are very serious and widespread. It is, in fact, because these kinds of violence are so pervasive that no action has been taken to deal with offenders. The coordinator reported that there is so much child sexual abuse that the community needs to grow stronger and begin to heal before it can face the enormity of the problem.

This sentiment is shared by the infrastructure group at the Council for Yukon Indians (CYI) called Dene Nets" Edet'An. They are sponsored by CYI to provide

training for workers in the communities and to foster self-esteem through workshops for First Nations people. They talk a great deal about the importance of maintaining balance between the spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual part of oneself.

Personal healing is prescribed for facilitators as well as for participants, but they do not directly address the violence issues that loom so large in the lives of so many Aboriginal women, children and men. Again, it is felt that much preparation is needed before steps can be taken to openly explore this huge and perilous territory. Reportedly, Elders were consulted before the group began its work, and this was their advice. I asked a facilitator, how it was that self-esteem could be strengthened without addressing abuse issues, since low self-esteem is so often attributable to childhood abuse. She found my point interesting, but felt that the Elders were right in their assessment that certain things couldn't be rushed. Communities might fall into turmoil if too many difficult problems were opened up all at once.

Those of us working from a victim-centered/feminist perspective experience great frustration and impatience with what seems an unbearably slow and evasive approach to a very critical situation: the on going rape and assault of countless women and children. The Territorial motto and logo developed a few years ago as part of a campaign against violence, epitomizes the soft sell that so many of us have rallied against. Thousands of buttons and posters were distributed depicting a circle of smiling faces and the words "Respect makes the circle stronger". Perhaps cynically, we felt that here at last was one area in which the Territorial government was all to happy to co-operate with First Nations, working to obscure, the problem of men's violence against women and children.

The Territorial Governments' Women's Directorate is perhaps the biggest proponent of this approach. They were always avowedly anti-feminist, and have become more so now that a right-wing government is in power and their own Minister is a conservative male who can barely conceal his hostility and contempt for the Victoria Faulkner Woman's Centre. Rather than working to improve communication and co-operation between First Nations and feminist groups, the government seems determined to help maintain a climate of mistrust.

The government tends to use the language that First Nations are most comfortable with, hence an emphasis on healing the holistic approach to "family violence". But this is done without any real understanding of the historical and cultural underpinnings of this perspective. Rather, the motivation is a need to distinguish the Women's Directorate from feminists whom tend to be regarded as man-haters who can't possibly represent the interests of most women who just want everyone to heal. Some First Nations women have come to appreciate something of the feminist perspective in their work with victims and their communities and have developed a different understanding of what needs to take place from that of the women's

Directorate or Dene Nets'Edet'An. Perhaps a positive move, is that the dialogue seems to be improving.

Recently a report was issued by a group that had been meeting for over a year to create recommendations for sex offender treatment programs in the Yukon. They consisted of the people from YTG Social Services, one of the local psychologists, and a variety of community workers. The outcome was extraordinary. They discarded the original premise around which they had formed - that offender treatment was needed, and replaced it with a victim-centered approach which put safety of potential victims above programs for offenders. Reasoning that sex offender treatment just doesn't work, they felt that the limited available money for addressing the problem would be better spent on educating communities about how to keep kids safe. If communities want to keep offenders in their midst, then they must provide continual monitoring of their behaviors rather then relying on the unlikely possibility that treatment will solve their problems. They must learn how to prevent abuse through anticipating potentially dangerous situations before they happen.

Public service messages and print materials will soon be produced advising parents, and especially single women, to take precautions on behalf of their children if they plan to have friends over for drinks, or if they're going out to the bar. This is the kind of practical advice that could make a real difference by raising consciousness about the potential risks children face when the adults around them are drinking. It could be an important stimulus for opening up discussion of a widespread problem which has been cloaked in silence for far too long. Best of all, CYI was involved in this group and the writing of the report. Certainly not everyone at CYI agrees with their conclusions, but the out come could produce enormous benefits for Yukon communities as a whole.

Some communities are ready to look at and even begin implementation of the report's recommendations. We have begun a process of looking at abuse issues by inviting Jane Middleton-Moz to facilitate healing workshops. Participants are encouraged, often for the very first time, to access and express their feelings about their own childhood sexual abuse. This a bare beginning. It is much harder to confront the reality of on-going abuse of children in the community, by family members, by Elders, and sometimes even by the Chief and members of the Band Council. But at least we are now experiencing a sense of movement as people of diverse backgrounds come together to talk and strategize about ways to deal with the enormous problems of men's violence against women and children in all of our communities.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

PURPOSE

This project was undertaken in order to obtain data on the kinds of information and services that are available for women and children suffering abuse in the Yukon. The questionnaire covered the following areas: who uses the service; what services are offered to women and children; what services are offered to men; what referrals would be made; what other kinds of services, etc. would agencies offer; limits to service; what is the effect of legislation or financial barriers; funding; fees or charges made; long term services; length of service; training of staff; solutions to male violence against women and children; publicity; what prevents women and children from using services; information available to women and children; what kinds of information are not available.

THE RESEARCH

A) Questionnaire Development

Discussions were initiated with everyone working on the project in Whitehorse. The ideas for questions came from these discussions. The first two issues were:

1. What is the community development process, and how does it affect what questions we are going to ask?

2. What kinds of information do we need?

B) The Questionnaire

The initial questionnaire was completed. We then refined it as a result of wanting its content to be congruent with our discussions. We then asked if we had "covered all of the bases" in terms of information that we wanted, in order to get information on services and material available. We only used one version of the questionnaire once we had settled on the final questions. We did know that we would be willing to restate questions in another way if we found that we were having difficulty in getting the respondents to understand what we were asking. We did not have separate questionnaires for different institutions, social agencies, government, etc. We thought that it was important that all agencies answer the same questions and at the end of the project we would be able to see if there were different answers or interpretations of the same questions.

The following is the final version of the questionnaire:

This survey deals with men's violence against women and children. There are many other forms that need to be examined, but we have chosen to look into this aspect only, at this point in time.

1. In your opinion, who are the people most likely to use your services?

2. What services can you offer to abused women and children? What services do you offer to a man who is abusing a women or a child?

3. If a woman or a child that was being abused came to you for help, who would you refer them to? Who would you refer the man to?

4. If your organization had a larger budget to help fund programs that help battered women and children, what else would you like to do in your community?

5. What are the limits to the services you can offer to abused women and children? Are these limits the results of legislation or financial barriers? Would your organization like to go beyond these limits?

6. From where do you receive the funding that allows you to provide services that help abused women and children?

7. What do you charge abused women and children who come to you for help for your services?

8. What kind of long term services do you offer to abused women and children? (long term may be anywhere from a month to a year after the fact).

9. What kind of training does your staff have that qualifies them to deal with abused women and children?

10. How would you solve the problem of male violence against women and children?

11. How do you publicize your services? Do you think that women and children who are being abused know they can come to you? Why? Why not?

12. What kind of information do you have regarding male violence towards women and children? What kind of information do you need or want regarding male violence towards women and children that you don't have or can't find?

C) Sample Selection

Based upon the number of possible agencies and departments, our sample was self-selected. That is, all persons who agreed to take part in our information gathering were respondents.

D) Difficulties

This project was taking place in the summer months, and therefore we were not able to speak to any school personnel. The elementary and secondary schools were out for the summer. Thus, many personnel in departments were on holiday, or just away from time to time. Additionally, some departments and agencies have only one person that they would want to answer questions in the area of violence against women and children. Thus, if that person were away, we were not be able to interview anyone.

E) Services in Small Communities

Reports indicate that violence against women and children is a serious problem, but in the north the isolation and lack of appropriate services in the smaller communities compounds the problem. Our inability to identify more than a few agencies providing services and counseling is a reflection of the reality in these smaller communities. We know of no studies for the Yukon that reveal how this problem can be solved.

F) Time to Complete Interviews

The questionnaire-interview took about two hours to complete. All respondents thought that this issue was so important that they did not mind taking two hours or more out of their very busy days. It was quite apparent to us that all respondents were pleased that someone was asking about their work, and that the length of the interview did not deter potential respondents.

G) Incentives to Reply

The only incentive for respondents to take time to do the interviews was the fact that the prevalence of violence against women and children in the Yukon is so pervasive. Also, a chance to reiterate frustrations, despair and hope was an opportunity not to be passed up.

H) Responses

There are two points to be noted:

1) that all of the persons who we were able to contact, and the persons dealing with violence against women and children, answered the questions;

2) that we were not able to contact all of the agencies, departments etc. that we wanted to.

I) Unsolicited Responses

We had only one unsolicited response. This was from a woman from whom it appeared that conversations about abuse as a general topic opened the door for her to ventilate about her own abusive experiences.

J) Overall Participation

Appendix C has a list indicating the type of agency available for contact by the FREDA-YUKON project, their location, and whether they were contacted for an interview.

K) Educational Institutions

In June many educational institutions are either closed for the summer, or instructors are in the midst of closing their classrooms, finishing end-of-year administrative details and marking final exams. While the few contacts that we made were interested in the project, they were not able to find time to participate in a two- hour interview at this point in the school year.

Educational institutions are often involved with a segment of Yukoners who may be more open to the possibility of change and education in the area of violence against women and children. Second, personnel in those institutions may have better opportunities to promote the possibility of change and education within the institution and within their classrooms. At the elementary level, they may also be able identify students at risk, and influence decisions that may initiate change within families and children which may well have long-term positive consequences.

If FREDA continues to have projects in the Yukon, they should schedule a comprehensive review and acquiring of information and interviews with school teachers, instructors, principals and professors earlier in the academic year.

L) Community Agencies

The community agencies and transition homes were all very co-operative and willing to make time to do an interview. All of them said the same types of things. In the Yukon we have serious consequences around issues of abuse. There is a high prevalence of sexual abuse, and there has been for quite sometime. We are now dealing with women, adult males and children of both sexes who have been abused by their parents, who in turn were abused by their parents, who in turn were abused by their parents. This prevalence of sexual abuse is deeply seated within both families from the dominant culture and families who are First Nations. This is coupled with an abuse of drugs, alcohol, solvents and the usual tobacco.

Of course, the entire Yukon Territory is finally undergoing the downturn that the rest of Canada has been experiencing for a year or more. Economic projects were always at a low ebb in the communities outside of Whitehorse, unless

there was a mine in operation. For those communities whose economic base was small before, things are really bad now. Perhaps almost as a spin-off, psychological and physical abuse are also present in large numbers. As one community person said to me, we on the whole are communities of very sick puppies!

Unfortunately, there is still a preponderance of the view that if we could only get rid of substance, alcohol, and drug abuse, women and families would then be able to change their lives. A few of the community agencies are beginning to see that if people become sober, then we will have to deal with the exposed dysfunctional behaviors, or look on as many of us within communities systematically and with full awareness destroy the community and its members.

In other words, we know how to deal with the abusive person/family who is high on something most of the time. What we don't know how to do, is deal with a lot of sober people and children who are in pain. We don't have the systems in place nor the resources available, to deal with large numbers of community members who will need psychological and infrastructure supports in order to live different lives.

As stated elsewhere in this report, as a society, Yukoners are eager to act upon economic plans of one type or another. We have decided that the Protestant work ethic is the only course to steer by, and if only we eliminate the scourges of alcohol and its effects, life for abused women, children and adult abuse survivors will take on a happy, competent glow. So far this hasn't worked. In cognitive terms, all organizations and transition homes understand that there is no quick fix. In non-cognitive terms, almost no community or transition home programs are able to plan interventions that must take place many years into the lives of the women and children they are working with.

What they can do is intervene for a few hours, a few days or a few months, or whatever the current crisis requires. The irony is that, if the recidivism rate is taken into account, interventions last over a longer length of time. Unfortunately, these interventions are not coordinated in any way. The result is that recidivism is common and forward momentum is very slow, and sometimes appears to be non-existent.

M) Territorial Government

We selectively elected to speak to territorial government agencies/ departments whose mandate is to work with violence against women and children. It is summer in the Yukon, and many people are away on holidays. As well, in at least one case, the main person responsible for programming and policy had been seconded to another public organization. We did not attempt to speak to YTG personnel outside of Whitehorse.

One of the department and program people who consented to be interviewed expressed concern about the level of abuse and violence, and the lack of any

but band-aid solutions to solve the problems. Again, while the politicians pay lip service to desiring healthy communities, real money and infrastructure support is often not available, except to write yet another report, showing in yet another configuration that things are bad and not getting any better, really, in the communities or in Whitehorse.

The concerns expressed were related in content to the responses of the other persons interviewed. Grave concerns centered around the levels and types of abuse and violence. There was also recognition that the territorial government has the responsibility to work with individuals and communities to eradicate these problems, as well as more concern that the dollars and personnel are just not being allocated in these areas. In all of the other interviews, the particular department or agency is doing something, but not necessarily all that could be done, and in no cases did respondents feel they were doing all that they would be capable of doing if they had more resources.

N) Federal Government

We interviewed federal government representatives who worked primarily in two areas vis a vis violence against women and children. These were The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Nursing Station personnel. We found this people to be very co-operative. In view of the fact that especially the women at the nursing stations are front-line workers, their consenting to fit us into two hours of their time was very generous.

When interviewing Nursing Station personnel, we found that most of the time they were being stretched to their professional limits, as well as their personal psychological and physical limits. One of the nursing stations has rethought its boundaries for personnel working with community members who were acting in violent manners. At other stations, the extent of emotional drain from working in situations involving violence against women, children, and abuse survivor's issues had left the women wondering if it was "worth it". Front-line work was especially difficult due to the fact that they, their partners and their children were all being affected by dysfunctional behaviors by members of the community.

The RCMP constables work in two areas which intersect with violence against women and children in the communities. One is the PACE programs in the schools, the chief source of interventions in violence against women and children and arrests vis a vis child abuse. In their interviews with us, they were aware and concerned about the levels of abuse and violence, especially when it affected and was perpetrated upon children and women. In the detachments we spoke to, most have at least one constable whose regular duties include specifically working with women and children experiencing violence and abuse.

O) Average Length of Interviews

The average length of interview was two hours. We asked all respondents to allow for at least two hours. Many times, the overall length of interview was up to three hours. As mentioned before, most respondents had quite a bit to say about abuse and violence, how it affected the life of the community, and in many cases theirs and their family's lives as well.

P) Data Compilation

We have not done data compilation in the traditional sense. The time, effort and resources to make such a compilation were not available in this project.

Q) Data Analysis

The main purpose of the interviews was to obtain a picture of problems and needs around violence and abuse of women and children in selected Yukon communities. We indeed got a clear picture of some of the problems that communities have in dealing with the abuse of women and children. We did not ask participants to do any weighing of items in terms of importance. We did not use any types of statistics to explore interactions, etc., nor to make comparisons about different respondent's answers. Such data analysis was not available in this project.

OUTCOMES OF RESEARCH

WHAT IS WORKING?

A) The Family

Most of the communities in the Yukon are smaller than, for example, a neighborhood in Vancouver. Therefore there are correspondingly fewer services available to families or their members on an continuing bases.

Depending on where you live, in Whitehorse, which might be called the biggest of the small, and how lucky you are, you will have access to some of the following kinds of interventions: crisis intervention and peer counseling, case management, family therapy, supportive counseling, marriage counseling, parent training, parent education, behavior modification, assertiveness training, anger management, alcohol and drug treatment, problem- solving skills, job-finding skills, financial and household management skills, homemakers services, and child care.

If you live in the smaller communities you might have access to almost none of the above mentioned interventions. Where there are services available, it is often on a crisis basis, are very brief and are there to stabilize the situation. Almost always, efforts will be made to establish some sort of supportive networks to connect the person/family with workers within the community. What is likely to happen is that the Social Services people, the RCMP, the Nursing Station personnel and the CHR will come together to try and create some type of support for the women or child involved. Unfortunately, this won't be enough.

In our view, basic services could be made available to families as well as to individuals in the communities. As well, the school system could be utilized to regularize a standard of behavior that demonstrates that abuse its many forms is not going to be considered acceptable behavior. The school and the Band could work together to develop activities that would foster life style that the community might find less harmful to families and children.

B) Children

Where abuse is or has been severe -- meaning it comes to the attention of someone in the community who can or will take action -- the most common intervention is to remove the child from the family home and place the child in foster or group home care. The foster family or the group home is often located within the child's home community. Referrals to Social Services may well also result in foster or group-home placement. While removal from the family home may satisfy safety issues, it doesn't diminish the hurt and negative impact on the child (Hanson, 1994).

Many of the Yukon's public schools have teachers and assistants, who work with children who are known to have been abused physically and/or sexually.

(We are assuming that psychological abuse always exists in conjunction with the other abuses, but that the school or other agencies will only deal with psychological abuse if it reaches proportions that affect the behavior of the child to the point that it is beyond the limits of acceptable behavior within the school as community or the community as a whole). There may not be teachers or assistants who are trained specifically to work with children who have had such negative experiences.

At the present time the Territorial government has reduced the number of assistants available to work with special needs students in the school. Never-the-less, teachers, assistants, as well as interested other members of the community could be trained to deal with people, be they large or small, who have been abused. We understand that this would likely cause some discomfort and perhaps even raise the specter of distrust. A group of people in a community have to start somewhere, and given the likelihood that resources will have to be found within the community, training in this area could be very helpful. In Whitehorse referrals are made to the Child Development Centre and Social Services.

C) The Community

A community might consider working together to be healthier if a third party intervenes in giving information that would be difficult for a community member to put forward. Some examples of possible third parties are: the major community intervention on an ongoing basis, the PACE program with the RCMP (Police Assisting Community Education). A difficulty is whether the RCMP will be allowed classroom time. Such interventions depend on what the teachers and administrators feel they can allot from the time for other topics within the curriculum.

Healing conferences within various communities organized by some community groups are another example. Unfortunately, these have proven to be interventions that often cause more harm than good. In-as-much as community members attend such conferences, and participate, they are good. But in some cases to date there have been no long-term follow up strategies.

While there must continue to be various types of interventions, it is very important that the community decides to work at solving its problems around abuse. This may be done more readily if there are third party interventions which give cause for introspection and break barriers of denial.

D) Services

Interest in comprehensive or multi service interventions with families has grown considerably over the years (Wolf, D.A. 1993). This type of work attempts to address the multiple needs identified among families and to bring attention to organizations and agencies. By providing services that are flexible and wide-ranging, it is hoped that there will be long-range positive outcomes for families, their present children and as we have found, their future children.

Our understanding is that various methods and types of skill development could be chosen or given by the organizations involved. This might include individual and group-based supportive counseling, skill-based coping skills, child management techniques, homemaker services, time-out afternoons, as well as social, child and legal counseling, and access to information and/or programs. The types of skills, information and services would be tailored to the needs of each family (Hanson, 1994).

By doing things in this way, the outcome would better serve the particular situation. A spin-off of these types of interventions would be that the family members would have experience in making change within their own context. We agree with research in the field of child abuse which says that "ecobehavioral intervention programs" work under the assumption that the context of abuse is multifaceted, and needs to be addressed on several levels. It is the "reciprocal influences between abusive behavior and environmental circumstances" that act together, and any change or problem-solving that is going to have a chance at success has to recognize and work within this type of paradigm (Ibid).

Research also suggests that there is significant importance in solving problems within the actual place they occur, i.e. the home, school, etc. This observation fits in well with the community development model, which also assumes that communities and people must be able to use the knowledge they have "at home," within a workshop or other situation (Roberts, 1980).

These types of activities should continue, as long as it is understood that, interventions which deal with individuals, also means that there must be some intervention and support to the family. And it follows that there must be interventions and supports to the community as well. If any of the three partners are ignored or over looked than the quality of change, if does take place will be diminished.

In summary, interventions that work to varying degrees, as indicated in interviews, are: parent-child training, stress reduction, problem-solving, assertiveness training, social support, self-control, anger management, health maintenance, nutrition, leisure skills, home safety, money management, marriage counseling, job finding skills, alcohol and drug treatment referral and counseling, and what could be called multiple-setting behavior skills.

What's working in the Yukon is the dissemination of information and education. There are transition homes, there are safe places, there are government programs, there is the Family Violence Prevention Unit. The RCMP in three communities have Constables who have some expertise working with situations involving violence against women and children.

Sexual and physical abuse are activities that are more openly being condemned within the communities. There is even some expectation, at least in Whitehorse, that things will get better. Specifically, it is the acceptance that

sexual, psychological, drug, alcohol, substance and Elder abuse are just not cool. There is awareness that the inability of community members to work at projects and complete projects, that the birth of FAS and FAE children, and the deterioration of families are very serious problems that we, as Yukoners, must deal with. Therefore, perhaps the most optimistic aspect of "what is working" is that we as a Territory are willing to acknowledge that in fact something is wrong, and that only we as individuals and as communities will be able to create the solutions.

WHAT IS NOT WORKING?

We have chosen to change the format for this section. We found, as did the workers that we interviewed, that "What is not working" is overwhelming. Therefore we have given our recommendations first. Then we have offered some analysis and lastly we have in bullet form listed specific things that have not worked and or are missing.

Put bluntly, the common approach is a "quick fix". By this we mean deciding that: "if only there were jobs", then everything would be fine, or "if only no one drank", then everything would be fine, or "if only the kids would stay in school", then everything would be fine, or "if only the Chief and Council operated in a good manner", then everything would be fine. The problem is that more often than not interventions are designed around unrealistic attitudes such as these.

In our interviews, what we were told over and over was that programs which sent a person outside either the Yukon, or outside of the community don't work. When the person returns there is little support for changes to lifestyle. The programs that remove children from their homes, and send them into foster or residential care and then send them back to the same situations also don't work. Interventions that focus on individuals, but not on the community or the family or focus on the family but not as part of a community don't work.

The special risks and strengths of diverse cultural and ethnic groups need to be systematically identified. We can therefore plan interventions that may work better and pose fewer risks to the community, family, or persons involved. At least two other results may also be accomplished: one is that the "community" may feel that it is respected and two, a higher feeling of ownership may become instilled.

Interventions and prevention strategies that focus away from the community, but do focus on individuals (which don't seem to be working well) tell us that we must explore societal and cultural considerations. In other words, if we are to work at interventions we need to consider issues such as cross-cultural perspectives and support change within the entire community.

There is clearly a lack of information concerning issues related to the functioning of the family, of the community, inter-generational and multi-related families and partnership. The relationship between marital/partnership problems, community disintegration, and the existence of multi-related families and their relationship to the abuse of women and children does not seem to have been studied, vis-a-vis effects on interventions.

Our communities are inhabited by multi-inter-related families. For example, only superficial responses are given in much group work or in workshops. The lack of male involvement within the community in a generic way may be a big part of the difficulty. What ever the reasons there is an absence of helpful

C) Community Difficulties/Problems

- failure of social and cultural agents responsible for family socialization
- lack of appropriate prevention-oriented activities
- lack of resources to activate prevention-oriented activities
- parent skills as a community venture
- education at all levels and no commitment to life long learning
- support services for families
- constructive child-rearing
- reduction of destructive child-rearing practices
- analysis of situation and cultural factors at work in the community, both positive and negative
- seeing the community as a whole: society, community, family, individual children, individual adults
- community education
- child development
- health - nutrition
- parenting principles
- support groups
- drop-in centres
- home visits
- child health
- child care relief
- focus on existing parents
- focus on young people who will become parents
- work with adolescents analysis of whether economic self-sufficiency is possible, and this being done before they become parents

E) Community Solutions

When people were asked what changes they would like to see in their community and how they would solve the problem of male violence against women, almost all of the people interviewed said that education is the key to change. Education about family violence must be brought to the attention of children as well as adults, even to children as young as five years old.

When someone has talked about and been exposed to a subject, they are more comfortable with the topic. This is of enormous importance when speaking of family violence. Children will then be equipped with the knowledge of what is acceptable and what is not, and more importantly, what is considered normal and/or tolerable.

Respondents felt that communities need to take responsibility for solutions. Among their comments were:

- Men must be held accountable for their actions.
- The community needs to change its attitude and take a firm stand on violence.
- There is a need to achieve consensus on a community level.
- To break the cycle of violence, violent conduct must not be tolerated.
- Better community values are needed. The community must ask "Why are we drinking? Why are we fighting?"
- There is a need to have support from and for family members.
- Leaders need to take a prominent stand and work toward the changes necessary.
- Parents, teachers and society must teach boys respect for women and themselves.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Many Yukon communities are instituting healing circles, conferences, and traditional First Nations values programs. As well, there is an increase in the use of elders as a final judge of what is traditional and appropriate action. There are also ongoing efforts to create economic enterprises, which will act as a base to sustain communities. It is hoped they will help extract smaller Yukon communities from what has been termed the "endless circle of dependence on government handouts."

As noted elsewhere in this report, the RCMP, Nursing Stations, Transition Homes, Bands, Yukon Family Services Association and YTG's Safe Places Program, are all in various ways working with communities and groups of people, especially women in the communities, to find ways to eradicate violence and abuse of women and children. As well, it is recognized that female and male survivors of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse must have programs that meet their specific needs. What seems to be problematic are:

(1) finding the money to carry out ideas or programs if the community or group of people should have ideas of what they want to do;

(2) understanding the process and the time it takes to become healthy;

(3) all of the concomitant changes that will begin to take place for the people and the Community involved, if and when such changes are instituted;

(4) realization on the part of communities and governments that economic programs won't necessarily solve community difficulties in the long term;

(5) how to keep children and women safe until danger from violence is not considered or required within communities.

Many of the basic difficulties manifested, contrary to common belief, are not just manifestations of long-term poverty. Perhaps most important of all is a real unwillingness on the part of our society to look at our collective history and recognize the kinds of expectations and behaviors that really perpetuate violence against women and children. We must also recognize what types of behaviors and information are really behind the words and pictures telling us that abuse in all of its forms is really okay.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

There is a great concern about violence against women and children and abuse in all of its forms within Yukon communities. With the implementation of Yukon land claims, First Nations communities will need members who are able to carry out the mandates they have fought for over 20 years to achieve.

World economic changes have already started to have an impact on the Yukon. In the near future, the traditional divisions between communities of First Nations and non-First Nations will have to diminish. What these factors mean within the context of violence against women and children and abuse in all of its forms in the Yukon, is that we must have a much higher proportion of emotionally and physically healthy citizens, or the work just can't get done. At least it can't be done by us.

What this means though is that what it really takes for us to be healthy is recognition and support of the lengthy process that becoming healthy requires. We must institute real changes within our northern society, so that we don't overtly speak of preventing violence and abuse, and then covertly maintain systems systematically supporting violence against women and children.

What groups, communities and government departments are doing now is what they have the time, resources and inclination to do. The RCMP carries out the PACE programs within the schools, and have also initiated a special unit with programs to train constables in behaviors most helpful in "domestic violence" situations. As part of this unit and its programs, they will track cases where crime involves abuse. They will encourage women who lay charges against abusers to persist in taking their cases through the justice system.

Nursing station personnel are looking for ways to help community members returning from treatment programs get the type of infrastructure support that will enable them to stay away from activities which lead back into old behaviors. They are also setting limits as to the types of violent and abusive behaviors they will allow to happen within the parameters of their workplace. In other words, they are showing by example that violent and abusive actions have consequences that are immediate, specific and realizable. Some of them are very willing to work with community groups in arranging presentations within the community against violence and abuse toward women and children and abuse survivors.

SUMMARY

WHAT THIS ALL MEANS

The information, ideas and missing links that we found have many contributing factors. In order for something effective to happen that will improve the community, families, and individuals with a resulting reduction in men's violence against women and children, a more holistic and integrated approach that is aimed at the community as well as its members is needed. Because abuse and the conditions related to its continuation happen at the most basic levels in the life of the community any response will also have to attempt to start at the most basic levels as well. All agencies, priorities for action, and community development initiatives require co-ordination and support by existing agencies and community groups. This may well prove to be the most difficult task. Although the community development process strengthens community organization, and makes it more possible for communities to meet their own needs and solve their own problems, the amount of secrecy and taboo around the subject of abuse will mean the road will more than likely be long and hard.

The community development model is based on the idea that there are consequences to social disorganization and lack of control within communities about their needs and resources. We might draw from the model at least three assumptions:

- the degree of social organization within the community will determine the ability of the community to organize and promote any healing; especially in the area of abuse and men's violence against women and children;

- interventions will have to identify the root causes of abuse and violence rather than just treatment;

- community development strategies designed by a community group based on the two above assumptions will improve community well-being on the whole and hopefully reduce the levels of violence and abuse against women and children.

The goal of community development (and the goals of FREDA) are to help strengthen organize communities so that the eventual elimination of men's violence against women and children could be realized.

Community organization and strengths may be particularly relevant to the many problems that are lumped together as "mental, emotional, abuse, health, social and economic" problems. These include anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse, developmental problems in children, abuse of women and children, and men's violence. They also include unemployment and poverty. Perhaps related would be the difficulties associated with teen pregnancy, physical problems associated

to stress and the long term effects of diseases like AIDS which can be transmitted through sexual abuse.

According to Albee(1982, cited in O'Connor, Herrera, & Hancock, 1985), the crucial factors underlying many of these difficulties are powerlessness, poor social competence, poor social skills, low self-esteem and lack of support networks. Stresses such as poverty, meaningless work, unemployment, racism and sexism cannot be adequately handled. The difficulties as well as frustrations that families and the community face are the result.

A stronger community with more involvement in its life in a positive way certainly would help reduce if not eliminate some of these difficulties and frustrations. Prevention and reduction could be effective through giving power to the community and individuals, which in turn would reduce stress, enhance social competence, and self-esteem and provide a desire to create and access support systems and networks.

The community development model emphasizes that there must be a group within the community interested in initiating, developing and gathering support to implement interventions. If it were a group of women under the auspices of FREDA, they would need to be able to value and develop long range collective action to solve community and individual problems in all of the areas of social change. Although not all at once!

This must be accomplished through existing local organizations and groups which might receive funds from sources outside of government. Not through the creation of an institution or government agency for the sole purpose of abuse and violence prevention. In other words it is community action, not just government action that will make a difference.

Here are a set of initiatives that might be of practical value :

- environmental enrichment: strengthening public policies, public programs, and the community in ways that promote a good quality of life for families, individuals and as stated before, the community;

- service enhancement: the transforming and realignment of existing services and agencies into more effective contributors to the well being of a community; this could include a much closer working with a community group such as proposed by FREDA;

- social supports: health care, child care, housing, recreation, parenting supports, family function, education, community networking;

- economic supports: monetary and other supports during periods of unemployment, underemployment, disability, illness, and the influx of money and outsiders to the community;

- rethinking existing resources: few Yukon communities have any supports let alone systems for persons at high risk that are planned and based on needs and priorities as articulated by community members; community development assumes that community members can find ways to better use their existing resources if asked and supported in initiating interventions;

- developmental transitions: allowing communities to focus on achieving specific desired outcomes (again the value of the type of initiatives that FREDA espouses). For example using approaches linked to developmental transitions in relation to birth, school readiness, adolescence, adulthood and old age. With this community development approach, the community or a group within the community might begin by choosing developmental transition points to use as their start/reference point. They could then build a plan --using consensus-- regarding the outcomes they would like to achieve in relation to this point and create strategies to be implemented in their effort to achieve their goals;

- commitment: changes in communities, programs, education, services, families, individuals who have impact on legislation, planning, resource allocation, program design, service delivery, accountability, land claims, self government.

In order for the community development approach and any practical set of initiatives to be effective, the support of existing positive care giving agencies and groups is essential. Providing support by:

1) building on the efforts and existing mandates already in existence;

2) provide information, analyses and research support;

3) provide service to clients through existing services, as gaps are identified and resources become available;

4) provide 'care for caregivers' be they in existing services or community group members, such as support groups, debriefing services, learning opportunities, education on skill building networks, outreach to other services and agencies within the community;

5) active co-ordination efforts through collaborative planning and priority setting, communication, liaison, group meetings, workshops.

The care for caregivers is important because over and over again burnout was mentioned as a factor in the present response to abuse and violent situations. Burnout is best defined as a state of physical, emotional, exhaustion, typically occurring as a result of long term involvement with people in situations that are emotionally demanding. It has been suggested that:

> "long hours, hard work and other stresses often cited as causes of burnout only lead to burnout when there is an absence of meaning in

THE FUTURE

FREDA has the power to work with Northern communities if they choose. Whether they will use the Community Development model or not remains to be seen. The Community Development process is a difficult choice, because for large institutions and organizations the long response time creates problems. Supporters of the process must be willing to face down the critics who will say that their time, efforts and money are being wasted because they can't see any immediate results. In other words, there will be a great deal of pressure for "instant" results for the institution to maintain its credibility.

In our view, people vs. economics is a conflict for small Yukon communities. What are the incentives to turn around three generations of violence or abuse? A better life, many of us would answer. In terms of our present society, is a "better life" really a better life? We are beginning to reduce social and medical programs for everyone in the Yukon and across Canada. The underlying assumption that these cuts are to the "have's", those who feel, or formerly felt, that they are entitled to such social protection.

What about abuse survivors, battered women, battered and abused children, the poor and the working poor, the illiterate and northern peoples who generally are part of the generic "have nots". What about us? It appears that many members of our society don't feel that those who are less "worthy" need to be worried about. Change has a profound effect on communities, especially on those which have few members, don't have an economic base, and have social problems. How will we choose to treat these women and children? What do we think they can offer us that makes it worth our while to keep them alive and to support positive communities?

The answers to these types of questions in an honest fashion tell us a lot about ourselves. When what the community is doing or wants to do doesn't fit into the rules of the institutions, or that the results aren't achieved quickly enough, or the success rate is smaller than economic/political norms dictate, the supporters of northern involvement are in a constant no win struggle.

Let's look at the possible benefits of FREDA to the Yukon. From time to time, we did get asked this question. Two types of activities may be of benefit to women within the Yukon:

1) The provision of resources and expertise, making it possible for women to look for other resources to carry out particular projects. These could combine with resource expertise in searching out and acquiring small grants, loans, and other information that would be useful to a community in solving problems associated with violence and abuse issues for women, children and survivors.

interpersonal behaviors one is likely to have within the group, and one's predisposition for particular models to be used to institute change.(Vaill, 1975).

In practical terms, failure on the part of a community change agent to understand something about herself at both the cognitive and effective levels -- how her behaviors affects other people, how to be honest in interpersonal relationships, what her own prejudices are, -- will negate whatever understanding she may have of models. A community change agent has to work with and keep the confidence and trust of people.

A final caution arises from observations made on the application of various strategies of social change. It is possible to infer that strategies and the actions of change agents, grow from models constructed on values, assumptions, and perceptions of one social or organizational group, and are then imposed upon another group. An example is when models are proposed by well-off, middle-class, power- holding groups, but are then applied to the lives of poor, powerless groups. The power holding groups models emphasize systems of technology and forms of coordinated planning which do not necessarily answer or even ask the basic questions surrounding power and poverty (Warren, 1974).

Let's go back to the process model. There are four kinds of data which must be taken into account when a person or a group is designing strategies for change within human systems:

- The first is the knowledge that has been accumulated over the years. As a designer of new strategies, one uses this information in relation to data from other situations.

- The second is the present situation; the people involved, the patterns of relationships, the community's history, its operation, its characteristics, etc.

- The third is the goals and norms of the community.

- The fourth is the self; the personal abilities, values, and action-styles of those community members involved in formulating new strategies (Roberts, 1980).

Using models is like using recipes. If the recipe calls for ingredients which you don't have, try something else in the kitchen. If you don't have the ingredients or the facilities, don't use that recipe. I kid you not; the danger is not illusory!

A) The Process of Community Development

The process of development starts with the perception of a problem or need on the part of a group of people. In fact, the process can be said to begin before that, with feelings of unease or tension about the conditions under which a person exists without a clear awareness of what causes the disease.

The next step in the process is to identify the cause of the disease, i.e. the problem. The process starts with the existence of some type of perceived deficiencies in social conditions, let's look at two examples. One example is the instance of poverty which arises out of clear deficiencies in the resources of people to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy and economically secure. The second example is a group of people who feel the need for greater enrichment in their cultural life. In other words, tension rises and this tension becomes a creative force for change. For the community change agents, the task is to identify the root causes of the problems and to plan strategies that lessen and eradicate them.

Getting to the bottom of the perceived deficiencies involves learning on the part of people in the group. Learning about the group and about their environment in itself entails group members using communication skills. For example, when the group has developed an understanding and trust of its attitudes toward each other, the question arises: where do we go from here? Using the process of group discussion, a set of objectives is formulated. At this stage the group becomes a small differentiated community within a community. They are not merely a collective of people with shared desires, but a group of people conscious of their set of objectives and their membership in a group committed to a realization of those objectives (Rubin, 1970).

While community does not become a reality until a group of people have succeeded in agreeing on objectives, a process of development is taking place before the community is established. Development includes the period within the process in which initial problems and tensions are worked through by concerned people allowing for objectives to be identified.

The emphasis is on the initiative and participation of people in defining their felt needs, and in doing something about meeting them through involvement in a problem-solving process. This is what distinguishes community development from other processes that proceed under the auspices of community clubs, social work, etc. The major difference is that often the former initiatives come from their views of what needs to be or should be done, rather than from the people/community whose needs are at issue, want done.

B) Learning and Action: Working Together

An important element in the development process is that of group identity. A sense of identity is crucial to the movement towards community and towards the formulation of objectives and a sense of power to do something about them. Establishing a group identity may be a long, groping and painful process, and it commonly draws criticism from other individuals, groups and institutions. It is only when there is a sense of identity and there are shared objectives that community begins to form.

While objectives are in the process of being formulated, something social is happening, but until the objectives are clearly formulated, and then accepted, it is doubtful that there is community. Community exists when a group of

people perceive common needs and problems, acquire a shared sense of identity, and have a common set of objectives.(Rubin, 1969).

At one end of the ideal spectrum, we have community as an organized set of relationships, a group in which membership is valued as an end in itself, and which concerns itself with many significant aspects of the lives of its members. It allows competing factions, its members share commitment to a common purpose and they agree on procedures for handling conflict within the group. Members share responsibility for actions of the group and have an enduring and extensive personal contact with each other.

At the other end of the spectrum is mass society, which is mechanical and rational, and is characterized by great ideological and aesthetic bankruptcy. As members of this society, we are often depersonalized and powerless. From community development there proceeds in its early phase a process of community creation.

C) Goals and Paradigms of Development

A feature of community development is that it assumes the capacity of people to conceive general goals, as well as immediate objectives. In the narrow sense, it can be said that achieving the successive objectives set by the community in question is what community development is about. A characteristic of the philosophy of community development is that it looks beyond those immediate objectives to a broader view of life's possibilities.

To realize objectives, learning is necessary. Skills such as organization, administration, information and planning may be acquired. Acquiring skills places the community in the position of being able to take action to achieve its objectives. Ideally, skill development and practice (i.e. education), is concerned not simply with establishing a rationale for learning a skill, but also with encouraging group members to look around, to examine and test ideas and information. Skill development
and practice in carrying out an activity with in the group, works to prevent the educator/community change agent from imposing her own assumptions upon those with whom she works. At the stage when education leads to the need for action, the emphasis changes from that of education to community development. Community development adds the element of action to a process of learning.

Equating community development with the knowledge, control and development of one's environment, without taking into account the need for self-knowledge, self- control, and self-development, is to deprive the process of community development of crucial humanitarian components. The development of community involves the development of the individuals, of their personal insights, and their understanding of who they are.

Community development process must overlay the process of education. Arresting the process of change at the stage of learning, is to arrest the full

course of community development. For instance, people may come to recognize that they want to have something other than what is already in existence, and to solve some problem, and they may begin to look around for knowledge of the sort that will help them to solve it. They may, for instance, join educational or training programs. If they become too settled in such learning experiences, then the process of community development could become derailed. Worthwhile personal development and the acquisition of knowledge will have taken place, but there may also be a retreat from a commitment to action.

The other side of that coin is what Roberts calls "leap-frogging" from the stage of tension (i.e. problem identification) to the stage of action without an adequate process of learning or formulation of clear objectives (Roberts, 1980).. In this case too, community development fails to occur. We have instead precipitate action which, without the intervening and sometimes long process of investigation and learning, leads to dissatisfying outcomes.

An example is the economic model of development, in which communities get things before there is sufficient analysis of what is really needed. This type of economic action involves a preconception of what the solution is before the problem has been properly identified - a characteristic of the paradigm of western industrial society. When the community assesses the extent to which it has achieved its objectives, this can bring out an awareness that there are still problems/ or that this is not the real problem, which can start off another cycle of development. The consequences of social change can be tension-producing as well as tension-reducing.

The concept of community development has within it an important assumption: action to be taken will not be violent and can be carried out through non violent social processes. Such a concept implies a society which will tolerate local groups formulating objectives involving changes in their conditions of living which in term implies a change in their relationship to the society. Deciding how far community development is really possible in a society which holds itself to be democratic, but where control, both local and central, is exercised by representatives of a majority group, is at minimum an interesting exercise.

The marginality of community development and its relative ineffectiveness as a process of wide change, or as an influential element in the whole political system, is related to the dominant political and social paradigm in which it operates. But remember, to be talking about community development is not to be holding it out as the only valid route to social and political change.
A mass society such as ours, with its values based on economic return, largesse of scale, multinationals and international decision-making and the remote rule of experts, that tolerance for and effectiveness of community development and its endeavours is unlikely. Community development is a challenge to the establishment, especially if it is successful (Reich, 1970).

APPENDIX A: CONFERENCE SUMMARY

NORTHERN WOMEN - NORTHERN LIVES
An International Conference on Women in the Circumpolar North

As a result of the Yukon College Women's Studies programme in which I am enrolled, I became aware of the first Circumpolar Women's Conference, held at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska. Originally our entire Women's Studies class had planned to attend the conference and report back to Jon Leah Hopkins of the FREDA project.

Due to summer jobs and unexpected travel, I was the only person who had the time to organize the trip and apply for funding from the Yukon Status of Women Council in Whitehorse. The sponsoring collective was the Women of Colour Collective. In the end, only Karen Jean Braun and myself were able to attend the Conference from the Women's Studies Programme. Upon the suggestion of the FREDA project, I invited other women from the community of Whitehorse to join us in attending the conference. The full delegation that travelled to Northern Women Northern Lives numbered six.

I wrote a proposal and applied to the Yukon Status of Women's Council for a grant that would cover our conference registration, housing and transportation. The grant, however, could only cover our registration fee and a small portion of our housing. We then went to Yukon College/YTG for transportation costs. Karen Jean and I were able to obtain a van from YTG and a gas card for travel within the Yukon. We still needed money to cover gas, oil or other expenses while in Alaska. The drive to Fairbanks is 15 hours.

The organization for the conference was very time-consuming, due to the fact that I had only received firm commitments from two other people, three women short of the number that would make the trip possible. After arranging for lodging and registering our group, I continued to help develop the interviews we were committed to doing at Northern Women Northern Lives.

I worked on the Fairbanks conference/trip from May 15,1994 to May 22,1994. The following week we set off for Fairbanks. The first day of the conference we decided which seminars would benefit the FREDA project. The idea was that if we tried to understand how other cultures and countries dealt with violence against women and children, we could learn the positive and the negative aspects of programmes and apply them to our project.

Whenever possible, we tried to talk to the presenters on a one-on-one basis, or to ask questions after their presentations. Three of the papers presented were of great value to the project. The first and foremost was a paper presented by a Greenlander delegate, which dealt very boldly with the issue of violence against Greenlander women. An interview was arranged with Mr. Sorensen after his presentation. Mr. Sorensen's knowledge and input into our project was a

catalyst to our direction. His studies of Icelandic patterns of violence matched closely with patterns of violence found within communities of the Yukon.

Another helpful presentation by Evelyn Zellerer examined the researching of violence against Inuit women. The paper was the rough accumulation of three years of research in the Canadian Eastern Arctic. Ms. Zellerer was happy to answer a few questions, but was very pressed for time. We were however able to request a copy of her paper, to be available when it is ready for publication.

Another session we attended that day highlighted the band-aid method often used in remote communities to solve the problem of violence against women and children. The presenter, Ms. Terry Mitchell, was very critical of the way in which temporary solutions are often incorporated in remote communities, due to the lack of permanent facilities and permanent staff. She also made the point that in some cases the safety of women and children can be endangered by not having proper counselling and shelter facilities available to women who have left their homes and entered counselling. We were able to discuss the subject with Terry at length on the drive back to Whitehorse. We received some very important insights from her experiences with battered women.

An interview was also conducted with one of the delegates from the United States. Robin was able to help us narrow down our scope and help us formulate more realistic goals. We also shared some of the information she had collected while researching her thesis for her degree in Women's Studies. She had written a paper documenting the history of violence against women in specific cultures, which included Arctic cultures.

We also had an interview with a former worker at the Watson Lake Transition Home. As well, I spoke with a woman who was denied help from the facilities for battered women in Prince Edward Island, and as a result moved to the Yukon.

A summary of conclusions and suggestions from the Northern Womens' conference follows:

- there is a greater need for safe houses and transition homes in the communities in the Yukon;
- there is a need for more money for existing transition homes;
- social services and transitions homes need to work together to help battered women and children escape abuse;
- there should be ways to allow women to stay in their communities, rather than leave for the nearest transition home;
- accurate statistics should be kept by the RCMP regarding: men convicted of abuse;

- Tagish — Marsh and Tagish Lakes
- Tlingit — Teslin and Atlin areas
- Kaska — southeast corner of the present White man bounded territory

Before the white people penetrated the interior lands the coast Tlingit, who were trading for years with the Russians, middled furs for the interior First Nations. Because of the wiping out of the sea otters, the trade was lucrative for the coast First Nations and drew people from as far north as Old crow to trading areas around the junction of the Yukon and the Stewart Rivers. The Russians on the coast never came inland except a ways up the Yukon River in present-day Alaska, and traded furs with the Tlingit middlemen. Apparently the Kutchin in the north middled for the Russians and northern tribes as well.

The First Nations people came together for the trade and also for potlatches, fish camps, and caribou migrations to hunt together. Meanwhile, back in the European history, Alexander MacKenzie had heard about a great river to the west, in 1789, and Franklin hit the north coast by boat in 1821. In 1839, the Hudson Bay Company sent John Bell across the Richardson Mountains from Fort MacPherson. Robert Campbell came up the Liard River to found Fort Frances in 1842. Fort Yukon was established in 1847. The British still had no idea where the Russians were and made a fort stockade in case of attack. The Russians weren't anywhere near them and couldn't have cared less.

Campbell was the first European to lead a party into the interior. He always seemed to do things the hard way, losing men to the Liard rapids and nearly dying of starvation in what is now northern B.C. Things began to go well, though, in 1848 when he established Fort Selkirk at the confluence of the Yukon and the Pelly Rivers. The Chilkat First Nations weren't enthusiastic about someone breaking their monopoly and siphoning furs off to the east, so one night in 1852 they canoed into Fort Selkirk and burnt it to the ground. They took everything of value that they wanted and sailed off, leaving Campbell & Co. to look after themselves. They didn't kill anyone, but they effectively stopped, and reversed the Hudson Bay Company's role in the southern Yukon. Robert then set the all-time record for voluntary suffering endured by a human being by snow shoeing all the way to Minnesota in an effort to get to England, tell the HBC directors what happened and get back at the First Nations when he got there. The HBC told Campbell to forget it.

The Porcupine River route across the mountains to Fort MacPherson and up the MacKenzie Rivers became the supply line for the entire Territory for a while and things settled down for the Bay. The churches were also in the race, and in the MacKenzie River area the Catholics were winning. One Reverend Kirby from Ft. Simpson was determined that the Anglicans be first, and became the first to travel over the Richardson Mountains. On his second trip he was accompanied by a Catholic priest but the First Nations stayed Protestant and to this day the Anglican church is still winning over here. Another enterprise that was happening was the building of an overland telegraph, in 1866, from

the United States of America, across the North, over the Bering Sea and across Asia to Europe. This was significant because it became the first modern economic failure — besides the Bay in Fort Selkirk of course — in the northwest, setting the stage for mines, highways, pipelines and a host of others to present time . Everything was going well and a fantastic amount of data about the north was being collected when the news came that a cable had been laid across the Atlantic Ocean. Thus ended the overland telegraph project.

In 1867 the Russian territory of Alaska was sold to the United States for a song, and the Bay got kicked out of Fort Yukon - it being in the United States. So they moved everything up the Porcupine River to Rampart House, and got kicked out of there when the news came that they were still in Alaska. So they packed it all up again and moved further up river built another fort and settled in. This fort barely paid for itself before closing in 1894. The men working there didn't think they had it so bad though, despite all the work. The land was beautiful, the game abundant and all the people friendly. After all, that's what they came here for.

Private traders began moving into the interior around 1870. McQuesten established Fort Reliance, six miles below the Klondike River in 1874, and McQuesten, Harper and Mayo built a post at the mouth of the Stewart River in 1886. The First Nations began to trade at these posts and their migrations changed to accommodate seasonal trade movements. Those men who built and ruled the posts became little short of legends in their own time. They held power, were trusted and respected for their character, which was exceptional. They knew better than to blow it — life was good in those days.

The small miners came into the country and flocked to the places where gold was to be found. There was always another strike around the corner, and part of your duty as a man in the Yukon was to spread the news of every colour and rumor in every pan from B.C. to Alaska. Everyone moved through the country on this note — miners, traders, First Nations and missionaries.

The coast Tlingit's, meanwhile, still wouldn't let anyone across the mountains, and a man named George Holt got his name into history by sneaking through the blockade sometime between 1875 and 1878. That wasn't very long ago. Deals were struck a little after this time by whites and First Nations to allow passage across the mountains. This was done by convincing the Chilkats that there were so many white men coming anyway that it was useless to resist them all, and the gunship anchored in Lynn Canal was thrown in as an added bonus. The First Nations saw the logic behind this and said it was all right with them, and they would even help the whiteman with his bags for a fee. This they did, and made a lot money at it too. So the Chilkats may have been responsible for the beginning of the tourist business in the Yukon. Holt eventually got murdered by the Copper River First nations and that is all we know about him.

The Territory was still a "little mans land", where a man's freedom was earned by his mastery of life in the frontier. Women too, we suppose. The big entities like governments and the mining concerns still have to fight the little people to this day. Yukoners have always had a deep distrust of all large enterprises, because, as this history points out, virtually none of them have ever done much good.

WATSON LAKE

Watson Lake is at Mile 635 on the Alaska Highway, just north of the border on the 60th Parallel. The population is approximately 1500 - 2000 depending on the season. Most of Watson Lake's population was of European ancestry and the First Nation people lived at Upper Liard. Upper Liard is located 8 miles west of Watson Lake, and has a population upwards of 300 people. Upper Liard was created in 1946, most likely having to do with the re-settlement of First Nations people by Indian Affairs.

Watson Lake, originally called Watson Lake Wye, began as a trading post in the late 1890s. The town was named after Frank Watson, a Yorkshire Englishman who trapped and prospected in the area. First Nations people have lived in this area for hundreds of years. In the 1950's the communities that were living along the rivers in the area were moved to make a number of communities - two of which are Lower Post, just south of Watson Lake, and Upper Liard. This man-made community of people, who were not necessarily wanting to co-habitat with each other, was done so that Indian Affairs could send the children to the residential school at Lower Post and "administer First Nations people better".

Two major factors have contributed to the continued existence of Watson Lake: the establishment of an air base in the 1940's and the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942. Since that time, the town has been a major transportation, accommodation, and supply centre. Today Watson Lake is the key transportation, communications and distribution centre for mining and logging activities in the southern Yukon, northern British Columbia and a portion of the Northwest Territories.

Watson Lake has an RCMP detachment, YTG health and social services branch, YTG drug and alcohol services, Family Service Association counsellor, a small hospital, and now a private medical clinical practice. Watson Lake also has two elementary schools, a public library, a post office and a Yukon College campus.

Watson Lake has the Help and Hope Society Shelter for women and children. Help and Hope opened its doors in 1992. The facility has 24 beds for women and children. In 1994, the territorial budget was cut drastically for Help and Hope. At the present time, it is not known how long the facility can keep its doors open.

TESLIN

Teslin is located north of Watson Lake. It was born with the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942. It's a two hour drive from Whitehorse, and an equally long drive from Watson Lake. Teslin has a population of 466, of which probably 75% are First Nations. The community has a nursing station, an RCMP detachment and a school, and is serviced by its own Health and Social Services YTG office. The First Nations people of Teslin are Tlingit, and they have a council, as well as a cultural centre and museum. The Teslin Tlingit First Nation has a social program whereby women or children who are in crisis may be accompanied by the RCMP or the social worker to a local hotel for safety. Women also are sent or go to the Kaushee's Place in Whitehorse.

WHITEHORSE

Whitehorse is situated on the banks of the Yukon River. It has a history dating back to the gold rush days of the late 1890's. First Nations people have lived at Whitehorse for hundreds of years. Until the late 1950's people coming to Whitehorse had access to some 250 sternwheelers plying the Yukon River north. The first rails of the White Pass and Yukon Railway were laid at Skagway in May of 1898, and the line to Whitehorse opened in July 1900. The White Pass train stopped running from Whitehorse in 1983.

The 1942 bombing of the Aleutian Islands stimulated the construction of the Alaska Highway. In less than 12 months, United States and Canadian army engineers completed construction of the 2,414 kilometer (1,500 mile) highway that linked southern Canada, the continental United States and Alaska. The Alaska Highway heralded numerous changes for the First Nations people of the Yukon.

Whitehorse was incorporated as the legislative capital of the Yukon in 1953. It is the largest city in Canada "north of 60". The Yukon Territorial Government (YTG), mining and tourism are the chief industries of Whitehorse. Construction, transportation industries and tourism service-related businesses play a vital role in contributing to the economic stability of Whitehorse. It has a population of 23,133.

Whitehorse has a hospital, two libraries, Yukon Family Services, Alcohol and Drug Services, Whitehorse General Hospital, Mental Heath Services, the Women's Directorate, Family Violence Prevention Unit, the Safe Places Programme, the Child Abuse Treatment Centre and the RCMP Detachment. It has 17 public schools and Yukon College. The transition home, Kaushee's Place, and a new safe home at the Kwanlin Dun Band are also located in Whitehorse. Kaushee's Place opened in 1980. A new facility was opened in 1992. The transition home can accommodate 24 women and children.

CARCROSS

Carcross straddles the Natashenie River flowing between Bennett Lake and Nares Lake. It is located 74 kilometers (46 miles) south of Whitehorse. Carcross combines the words Caribou Crossing, denoting the herds of animals that once migrated across the strategic narrows.

Carcross is at the foot of Montana Mountain at the end of Lake Bennett. A chain of large lakes can be found, stretching from the end of the Chilkoot Trail to the mouth of the Yukon River. In June of 1900, Carcross was a tent town, but an important stop for the White Pass and Yukon Railroad. Old mining roads and abandoned mine workings abound in the area, once renowned for its gold and silver deposits.

Today Carcross has a population of 400. More than 50% of the community is First Nations. It takes just a bit less than a hour to drive from Whitehorse to Carcross. Carcross is the home of the Tagish-Tlingit First Nation people. The first contact with Europeans was in 1898. About 21 miles from Carcross is Tagish, which is a traditional camping place for the Tagish First Nations people. Tagish was probably the most permanent place for eons for First Nations people, Carcross being a convenience created by Europeans for the White Pass Railroad.

Carcross has a school, a nursing station, an RCMP detachment, and a Health and Social Services office. There is no safe home in the community. Women in crisis are sent to Kaushee's Place, the Transition home in Whitehorse.

CARMACKS

Carmacks is located at the junction of the Klondike and Campbell highways, 104 miles north of Whitehorse. The population is 487 people. The community is located 104 miles (167 kilometers) north of Whitehorse. Carmacks has been in existence for hundreds of years. It is located at the confluence of the Nordenskiold and Yukon rivers. First Nations people have had fish camps here forever. This place was also on the route of Athabascan peoples en to trade with the Coastal Chilkat people.

The European name for this site comes from George Washington Carmacks , who discovered the first gold that led to the Klondike Gold Rush. The town served as the site for a North West Mounted Police station in the 1890's. The original community at that time consisted of sod-covered buildings around the police buildings and a roadhouse. Carmacks was a stop for overland travelers and steamers on the Yukon River. It also maintained a major fox farm and a coal mine. Although coal was discovered in 1893, a mine was not opened until 1905. The Tantalus coal mine was closed in 1922 following an explosion, and continues to burn underground. A second mine opened in 1923 on Coal Mine Hill to the north of town. This mine was active until 1938 when it too was closed. Upon its reopening in 1974, it operated as an open- pit mine until its

final closing in 1981. There is still speculation that the Yukon may open a coal mine in this area.

The Klondike Highway was constructed in the 1940's during the Second World War. Mining and government-related jobs sustain Carmacks' economy. Though Carmacks experienced the devastation of a forest fire in the 1950's, has seen the closing of the Dawson Trail and the end of steamboat transportation, it has continued to grow.

It takes two hours to drive from Whitehorse to Carmacks. The community provides health care and social services, has an RCMP detachment, and is the home of the Little Salmon First Nation. These is a public school, a bar and several hotel/motels. The town has two gas stations and is a refueling stop for people traveling to Faro, or going further north towards Dawson City. The town is divided, with most services and the white community residing on the highway side of the river, and most of the First Nations community across the bridge on the other side of the river. All YTG and federal government services are located on the white community's side of the river. The Little Salmon First Nations has constructed a new band administration building containing an apartment, which in fact provides a safe haven to women and children in crisis.

DAWSON CITY

Dawson City is located 526 kilometers northwest of Whitehorse. Dawson is located at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon rivers. As with many Yukon communities, the site of Dawson City was and still is a fish camp. The Han First Nations people lived at Moosehide, which is a 40-minute motorboat ride up the Yukon River. The population of Dawson City is 1,974.

With the discovery of gold on August 16,1896 on Bonanza (formerly Rabbit) Creek by Skookum Jim, George Carmacks and Dawson Charlie, Dawson City grew from a small mining camp to become the largest city west of Winnipeg and north of San Francisco in 1898. In fact, it was not until the summer of 1897, when the new Klondike millionaires unloaded their two tons of gold from the 5.5. Portland in Seattle and the 5.5. Excelsior in San Francisco, that the news of the Klondike Gold Rush flashed around the world. It is estimated that more than 100,00 people set out for the Klondike, with approximately 40,000 actually making it here.

Between the dream and the reality of arriving was the real work and hardship of transporting a ton of goods from wherever it was that you started from, through the harshness of the bush and mountain trails like the Chilkoot and White Pass, and having to build boats or rafts to ferry yourselves and goods on the Yukon River to Dawson City.

By the turn of the century, Dawson City had become a refined city, boasting grand government buildings and stately homes complete with the amenities of

running water, electricity, and telephones. Many referred to Dawson City as the "Paris of the North".

Unlike other gold rush communities, Dawson has refused to succumb to economic declines, disastrous floods, fires and the loss of its status as the capital of the Yukon. In 1979 Dawson City residents had committed themselves to a revitalization program strongly geared not only to placer mining, which is still a thriving industry in Dawson, but also to tourism and in the future, agriculture.

The Han people have occupied the Klondike region for centuries. Their peaceful lives were abruptly and forever changed with the arrival of gold-hungry prospectors. For years, Han traditions were lost. However, elders and community leaders are leading in the revival of traditional knowledge and customs.

Dawson City of course at one time had the type of services that Whitehorse, as the capital of the Yukon, has now. But today's Dawson has a nursing station, which was at one time the hospital, a senior citizens' home, a library, an RCMP detachment, Health and Social Services, CEIC Outreach, a family counselling service and the Dawson Women's Shelter. Dawson also has a child care centre, a school and a men's shelter.

The Dawson City Women's Shelter opened its doors in November of 1987. This was the second transition home to open in the Yukon Territory. The shelter is located in a residential area in the south end of Dawson City. The shelter can accommodate up to six women and their children. The Dawson shelter is used by other communities such as Old Crow—the Yukon's most northerly community , which is 1,000 air miles north of Whitehorse. To give some type of perspective, that's almost as far from Whitehorse as Whitehorse is from Vancouver, Mayo, two hours away from Dawson by road, and Pelly Crossing, which is also two to two and one-half hours from Dawson City by road.

SUMMARY

For Yukoners, our history, both Yukon First Nation and Yukon non-First Nation, shapes what our present and our future may be. That is why we have taken such pains with history and models. It's not possible for us to think that any work done in the Yukon, or work to be done within Communities in the Yukon, will not be profoundly affected by the shape of our past and our present, to a degree that people living in larger centres and perhaps even 'outside' cannot easily imagine.

For example, what First Nations decide on as a course of action around the Umbrella Final Agreement on land claims is still very much influenced by the clan systems; traditional ways of accomplishing things and the strength of leadership within clans. And of Course, the recent experiences of the last 50 years since the Alaska Highway was put through are pivotal.

Another example is the determination of what type of economic development will be feasible to keep to life in the Yukon. We are so new, as a community, at making a go of such an enterprise as the Yukon ,that we don't know the answers and aren't necessarily very good at modeling solutions. We don't have hundreds of years as a community living together to sift through, like the tailings—miles and miles of them at Dawson— gleaning gold even from this source of castoffs.

APPENDIX C: GROUPS CONTACTED

Community Agencies:

Agency	Location	Contacted?
AIDS Yukon Alliance	Whitehorse	Yes
Gay & Lesbian Alliance	Whitehorse	Yes
Kwanlin Dun Band	Whitehorse	Yes
Racism Council of the Yukon	Whitehorse	Yes
Safe Home	Carmacks	No
Safe Home	Carcross	No
Safe Home	Teslin	No
Second Opinion Society	Whitehorse	No
Skookum Jim Friendship Centre	Whitehorse	Yes
Transition Home	Dawson City	Yes
Transition Home	Watson Lake	Yes
Transition Home	Whitehorse	Yes
Women's Centre	Whitehorse	Yes
Yukon Family Services	Whitehorse	Yes
Yukon Federation of Labor	Whitehorse	Yes

Territorial Government:

Agency	Location	Contacted?
Community Health Rep.	Carcross	Yes
Community Health Rep.	Carmacks	Yes
Community Health Rep.	Dawson City	Yes
Community Health Rep.	Watson Lake	Yes
Council for Yukon Indians	Whitehorse	Yes
Justice Department	Whitehorse	No
MLAs	Whitehorse	Yes
Safe Places Programme	Whitehorse	Yes
Women's Bureau	Whitehorse	Yes
Yukon Human Rights	Whitehorse	Yes

Federal Government:

Agency	Location	Contacted?
Community Health Unit	Carcross	Yes
Community Health Unit	Carmacks	Yes
Community Health Unit	Dawson City	Yes
Community Health Unit	Watson Lake	Yes
Mental Health Unit	Whitehorse	Yes
R.C.M.P.	Carcross	Yes
R.C.M.P.	Carmacks	Yes
R.C.M.P.	Dawson City	Yes
R.C.M.P.	Watson Lake	Yes
R.C.M.P.	Whitehorse	Yes
Whitehorse Gen. Hospital Mental Health Nurse	Whitehorse	Yes

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APPENDIX E: THE RESEARCHERS

JON LEAH HOPKINS

Jon Leah Hopkins is a community development consultant who has lived in Whitehorse for fifteen years. She has served on the executive of a number of national citizens' participation organizations, including: the National Action Council on the Status of Women, the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, and the Federal Council of the New Democratic Party. She has a strong interest in social justice, the women's' movement and democratic social action in general.

She currently serves on the Steering Committee of Whitehorse's Ecumenical Circle for Social Justice, whose prime concern at the moment is providing a community-based response to the proposals of the federal social policy reform process. She has recently completed facilitation of the community consultation for her region on behalf of the United Nations World Summit for Social Development, after participating as a member of Canada's Non-Government Organization delegation to the Summit's Preparatory Conference in New York City.

JAN FORDE

Jan Forde is a feminist who has worked with a number of non-profit women's organizations dealing with the issues of violence against women. She is a former Director of Kaushee's Place, the Yukon Women's Transition Home, and has worked as a counselor at two lower mainland Transition Houses, as well with Battered Women's Support Services and the WAVAW Rape Crisis Centre. She has been an active spokesperson for battered women, utilizing media and public events to raise awareness of the need for societal change.

She is currently employed as a social worker by the Yukon Government, but remains active as a proponent of zero tolerance with regards to violence against women. She sits on the Social Services Advisory Committee, the Executive Director of the New Democratic Party, and continues to help organize International Women's Day, December 6th, and similar events in order to focus attention on the ongoing problem of men's violence against women.

JUTTA HOPKINS

Jutta Hopkins is a first year Women's Studies student and a member of the Women's Centre. Jutta's role in this project was as a student researcher. She was assigned the task of organizing the trip to the Northern Women Northern Lives at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and then to submit her findings to Jon Leah Hopkins. It was determined that she should focus on an agenda that would bring change and improvement to the systems that abused women use, rather than study it and make a report of findings.