The Profession of Shelter and Service Work Project

by Kim Fellner, PATHS Adult Education Consultant and Crystal Giesbrecht, PATHS Director of Member Programs and Services

In August 2013, PATHS began work on our project, The Profession of Shelter and Service Work. The project began when the PATHS Board of Directors identified the need for information on hiring practices and job descriptions specific to shelter/service work. We then began research to determine what makes shelter/service work unique and to develop hiring tools specific to the work.

Eleven out of eighteen member agencies participated in the research, representing a diverse range of PATHS members including urban, rural, southern, and northern shelters and service agencies. We began by collecting existing job descriptions and job interview questions from participating agencies. We then travelled to member agencies where we conducted staff workshops and interviewed Executive Directors. We wanted to hear from these experts about what makes up the profession of shelter/service work. Following the workshops and continued on page 2…
The results of *The Profession of Shelter and Service Work* project include:

- PATHS Profile of a Professional Shelter/Service Worker
- Narrative report
- Hiring guide
- Sample interview and reference check questions
- Sample letter of employment
- Sample job description

The next edition of the PATHS Newsletter (May 2014) will be a special edition for **PATHS 30th Anniversary**! We will be profiling our member agencies in this issue.

Please send photos, articles, etc. to paths.services@sasktel.net by **April 30th**.
Changes to Canada’s Prostitution Legislation
by Crystal Giesbrecht, PATHS Director of Member Programs and Services

On December 20, 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada’s prostitution laws. The Supreme Court ruled that these laws are unconstitutional and gave Parliament one year to produce new legislation to replace the existing laws. In the meantime, the existing legislation remains in force. Currently, prostitution is not a criminal offence in Canada, though the Criminal Code prohibits several activities related to prostitution, including operating a bawdy house, living off the avails of prostitution, and communicating in public for the purposes of prostitution. The Supreme Court declared the Criminal Code provisions regarding prostitution unconstitutional for violating sections in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that guarantee the right to life, liberty, and security of the person, freedom of expression.

By prohibiting common bawdy-houses (commonly known as brothels), the Criminal Code prevents prostitution from taking place in any fixed, indoor location—including the prostitute’s own home. The prohibition against “living off the avails” does not prevent those who are engaged in prostitution from earning money by selling sex, but it does prohibit anyone else (such as pimps) from profiting off of another person’s prostitution. This provision also means that prostitutes cannot pay others (bodyguards, managers, etc.), as that would mean that individuals would be living off the avails of prostitution. The provision preventing communication for the purpose of prostitution in public means that individuals caught communicating for the purposes of buying or selling sex can be subject to criminal sanctions.

This case began when three (current or former) sex workers, Terri-Jean Bedford, Valerie Scott, and Amy Lebovitch, filed a Charter challenge with the Superior Court of Ontario. The case was argued before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in October 2009. In June 2011, the Attorney General of Canada and Attorney General of Ontario appealed the Superior Court decision in the Ontario Court of Appeal (the ruling was released in March 2012). Both the Attorney General of Canada and the Attorney General of Ontario and Bedford et al., challenged the Ontario Court of Appeal decision. The Supreme Court heard the appeal and cross-appeal on June 13, 2013 and the decision was released on December 20, 2013.

If the federal government chooses not to draft new legislation to replace that which the Supreme Court struck down, the three sections of the Criminal Code (operating a bawdy house, living off the avails of prostitution, and communicating in public) will become decriminalized as of December 19, 2014. The federal government has indicated, however, that it is working on new laws to govern prostitution.

Bedford, Scott, and Lebovitch have stated that they are in the sex trade by choice, that they enjoy their work, and that they will continue to work in prostitution in the near future. They are hoping to see prostitution decriminalized, and both Bedford and Scott have indicated plans to open brothels of their own, should brothel ownership become legalized in Canada. Bedford et al. have stated that decriminalizing prostitution would make sex workers in Canada safer and would allow women in prostitution to legally own their own businesses and hire staff, such as drivers and bodyguards.

Bedford et al. stated that this case was only about the 10% of women in prostitution voluntarily and have said “not everyone will benefit from this decision.” Those who disagree with the position of Bedford et al. state that the 90% who did not choose to become involved in, or do not wish to remain in, prostitution are the most vulnerable and that the legislation should be written to protect this majority. Equality Now said that it would be “concerning to see a policy made for such a minority when so many women don’t have choices.”

Bedford et al. would like to see prostitution in Canada decriminalized, meaning that there would be no penalties for activities related to prostitution. Countries where prostitution is decriminalized include Germany and New Zealand. Another legislative option is legalization, where prostitution is legal, but regulated by rules that govern under what circumstances prostitution can take place. Amsterdam is one example of a legalized regime.

Another model is abolitionism, often known as the “Nordic Model”. The model was pioneered by Sweden.

Norway and Iceland have implemented similar models. The Nordic Model seeks to abolish the exploitation of persons through prostitution.
by criminalizing those who exploit prostitutes, that is clients (johns) and third parties (pimps), and decriminalizing prostitutes themselves. The abolitionist model also works to assist individuals to exit prostitution by funding and implementing support services, and works to eradicate prostitution via public awareness campaigns about the harms of prostitution.

The Women’s Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution advocates for the adoption of an abolitionist model. The coalition is comprised of seven organizations that assist women and girls who have been exploited in prostitution including the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, the Native Women’s Association of Canada, and the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies. The Women’s Coalition was one of thirteen interveners in the Supreme Court case.

Kim Pate, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, said that the Women’s Coalition’s “position is linked to the substantive equality needs of women and girls in this country and as long as we will allow women and girls to be unequal, as long as we will allow them to be sold, as long as we will allow them to not enjoy where there is economic, social, or legal equality then we will continue to see them subjected to this kind of violence.”

She said that the women and girls that the Women’s Coalition works with “aren’t choosing [prostitution], they aren’t choosing at 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 to be on the street, selling their bodies.”

Pate has said that the abolitionist model would help protect those who were coerced or forced into prostitution, but would not prevent women who choose to work in prostitution (such as Bedford, Scott, and Lebovitch) from continuing, as the model calls for women in prostitution not to face criminal sanctions. Bedford et al., as well as individuals who buy sex, do not agree, however. Some sex workers have voiced the opinion that criminalizing johns would scare away their customers and prevent them from making an income, and as was presented in *Bedford v. Canada*, some take the view that sex work takes place between two consenting adults and criminalizing it is a breach of an individuals’ rights to liberty and freedom of expression.

So far, the government has offered no indication if it will go with a decriminalized, legalized, or abolitionist model, or a different approach. On February 1st, 2014 Federal Justice Minister Peter MacKay announced that the government had already started to draft new legislation. The *Public Consultation on Prostitution-Related Offences in Canada* was announced on February 17th and remains open until March 17th.

The consultation consists of a set of five questions, which can be found online at: http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cons/curr-cours/proscons-conspros/.

References:


If you are interested in more background information on Canada’s prostitution legislation, email paths.services@sasktel.net.
Trainings Event
Tuesday, May 27th
9 am—4:15 pm
Location: Adult Centre for Employment Readiness and Training (at the Regina Food Bank)

Presentations:
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<tr>
<td>Origins of Violence: What Every Shelter &amp; Service Worker Needs to Know</td>
<td>Kim Fellner, Adult Education Consultant</td>
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<td>Positive Discipline: Implications for Child Abuse Prevention</td>
<td>Dr. Joan Durrant, Associate Professor, Social Sciences, University of Manitoba</td>
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<td>Walking the Path Together: How You Can Mentor Your Clients to Parent Their Children</td>
<td>A programme of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters</td>
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Evening Event  Join us to celebrate PATHS 30th Anniversary
Tuesday, May 27th
5 pm—Cocktail Hour with music by the Ben Winoski Project
6 pm—Program Begins
Location: Ramada Plaza Regina

Video Presentation: PATHS Members Contributions to the Movement to End Violence Against Women in Saskatchewan and Our Plans for Creating Non-Violent Communities in the Future
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Joan Durrant—The Global Movement to End Corporal Punishment of Children

PATHS AGM & Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 28th
8 am—Breakfast
9 am—Meeting
Location: Adult Centre for Employment Readiness and Training (at the Regina Food Bank)

Registration:
* Registration is free for PATHS member agency staff*
Early Bird Deadline for Members: April 2nd (register by this date to be entered in a prize draw!)
Final Deadline: April 30th
The Little Kokums Club is a program that takes place in La Ronge so that women and girls (ages 6 and up) can gather together to share their talents, learn new skills, and spend time together.

"Kokum" is the Cree word for grandmother and the goal of the Club is to bring back the Kokums’ role. The Little Kokums Club allows younger women to be mentored by older women in the community, and to give women and girls the opportunity to learn sewing and crafts. Women who come are mentored by other women in their community, and some women and girls attend along with their mothers and grandmothers. Women with experience with handcrafts come to share their skills and help other women with their projects. They bring projects that they have completed as examples to show the group.

The first project that the Club worked on together was mukluks. Following that, the group made mitts and beaded purses. The Little Kokums Club’s next project will be Star Blankets.

The program began at the end of November 2013 and is funded by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s Family Violence Prevention Project. With this funding, Piwapan staff are able to purchase and provide all crafting supplies needed as well as refreshments for the gatherings. This allows women and girls to attend the Little Kokums Club and craft traditional projects at no cost.

Staff from Piwapan Women’s Centre organize the gatherings and women from the community who have experience with traditional handcrafts attend and mentor others in beadwork and sewing techniques. The Club meets twice a week and gatherings usually include 20 to 40 women each time.

The Little Kokums Club is giving women a place to learn traditional skills, pass traditional skills on to younger generations, as well as a place to spend time with and learning from other women in the community.
BOOK REVIEW
Counselling Victims of Violence: A Handbook for Helping Professionals
by Kim Fellner, PATHS Adult Education Consultant

Counselling Victims of Violence: A Handbook for Helping Professionals was written by American counsellor Sandra L. Brown. In the introduction, Brown contextualizes the chapters to follow by highlighting crime statistics and framing the breadth of the problem of violence in general. She identifies her target audience as spanning beyond mental health to all helping professionals working with victims. Introducing the book in this way is problematic for Canadian readers in two ways. First, Part I covers clinical trauma treatment information with a particular focus on PTSD that carries throughout the book. This is valuable information, however, in discussing the psychodynamics of trauma, and throughout the book, the author uses language such as treatment and diagnosis. This may be alienating to a Canadian audience in that many helping professionals are not in positions where they treat or diagnose mental illness. Second, the statistics and references provided throughout seem somewhat outdated. Originally printed in 2001, this aspect of the book is more than ready for another round of revisions. Canadian readers should be proactive in sourcing Canadian numbers to fully understand the concepts being discussed.

In Part II, the author covers numerous specific victim categories including full chapters on property crime and robbery, hate crimes, domestic violence, elder abuse, violence against children, childhood sexual abuse, sexual trauma, homicide and social trauma. The inclusion of these categories is the strength of this book, particularly for shelter and service workers who are likely to encounter victim experiences beyond domestic violence. Each chapter is logically organized to include a victim’s story, background information on the specific type of victimization, crisis intervention, short and long term counselling, resources, and a chapter overview. Client concerns and the issue of secondary victimization are also discussed. In closing the author touches on the personal side of being a service provider as well as the role professionals play in shaping the field of victimology.

This book, especially the sections on domestic violence, sexual trauma, and childhood sexual abuse, will no doubt be of interest to shelter and service workers.

Karyn McCluskey, Director of the Violence Reduction Unit in Glasgow, Scotland, lectured at the University of Regina on February 3rd, as part of this year’s Dr. Gordon Wicijowski Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Chair in Police Studies Lecture. Karyn has worked in intelligence analysis for police forces across the United Kingdom. She was originally trained as a registered nurse, and also holds a BSc and MSc in Psychology. Karyn is an Honorary Lecturer in Medicine at the University of Glasgow and a Fellow by distinction of the Faculty of Public Health.

Mccluskey spoke about what Scotland did to take their country from the most violent in Europe ten years ago, to a non-violent society which is now experiencing a 37-year low in rates of violence. Ten years ago, Scotland had an excellent detection rate (98% of crimes resulted in an arrest), but was unsuccessful in terms of preventing violence. At that time, McCluskey and the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit began investigating how to prevent violence. She said, “No one thing will fix it—there are a thousand solutions, because it is such a complex problem”.

McCluskey stated that interpersonal violence is a public health issue. She told the Regina Leader Post, “We decided to look at violence like a disease and we focused on how you caught it and how you prevented it—from domestic violence all the way up to homicide. We worked to get everyone involved. I think Scotland was one of the first countries to identify violence as a disease, as a public health issue.” The public health model begins with surveillance of the violence taking place, then data is collected, and risks are identified.

“Violence makes you ill”, said McCluskey. She spoke of youth that were living in neighbourhoods controlled by gangs and were experiencing violence and witnessing addictions at home. These kinds of living conditions lead to chronic stress, which causes cortisol levels to rise, having very tangible effects on physical health, such as increases risk of heart disease. These are good clinical reasons to prevent violence.

McCluskey stated that alcohol was a factor in 80% of the homicides and 58% of the sexual assaults that were dealt with in Scotland. She stressed that alcohol was not a causal factor, but was “like pouring fuel on the fire”.

One of the first things that the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit did was to train anyone who worked with families to look for signs of domestic violence and to report it. For example, they discovered that dentists were treating patients who had their teeth knocked out, but the dentists were not discussing violence with these patients because they were unsure of what to say—dentists are now trained to intervene when they suspect domestic violence. The Unit also discovered that animal abuse was linked to domestic homicide, and that it was female victims who took pets to veterinarians after they were harmed by their abusive partners. Veterinarians were then trained on how to ask women about abuse when they encountered animals they were suffering from non-accidental injuries.

All types of violence were targeted with this strategy. The Unit implemented a program where they gathered gang members in courtrooms, spoke to them frankly, and provided them with a vast array of services to help them exit gangs and find sustainable employment. They also began the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program which works to prevent bullying and gendered violence, by empowering students not to be bystanders, but to take an active role in their school. One of the most interesting changes occurred when citizens decided to take responsibility for the conditions in their community into their own hands. A group of independent community members, without funding from public services, went door to door, assessing which houses needed to be fixed, and worked together to make repairs, prioritizing those that were most in need to be done first. This situation demonstrates that individuals can make change when they work together toward a common goal.

Karyn McCluskey said that Scotland’s move toward non-violence was “about looking at the issues and finding real solutions”. She feels that Saskatchewan has the potential to turn things around and lower the high rates of violence in Saskatchewan.

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our province. McCluskey said that to end violence, communities have to be willing to try something different and said “resilience is everything when making changes”.

For more about the Violence Reduction Unit’s programs, visit their website: www.actiononviolence.com.

References:


Profession of Shelter and Service Work Word Find

Find the words from the profile on page 1!
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Member Agencies

- Battlefords Interval House
  (306) 445-2742
- Hudson Bay Family and Support Centre
  (306) 865-3064
- Moose Jaw Transition House
  (306) 693-6511
- North East Outreach and Support Services
  (306) 752-9464
- PARTNERS Family Services
  (306) 682-4135
- Piwapan Women’s Centre
  (306) 425-3900
- Project Safe Haven
  (306) 782-0676
- Qu’Appelle Safe Haven Shelter
  (306) 322-6881
- Regina Transition House
  (306) 757-2096
- Saskatoon Interval House
  (306) 244-0185
- Shelwin House
  (306) 783-7233
- SIGN
  (306) 783-9409
- SOFIA House
  (306) 565-2537
- Southwest Crisis Services
  (306) 778-3692
- Waskoosis Safe Shelter
  (306) 236-5570
- WISH Safe House
  (306) 543-0493
- YWCA Isabel Johnson Shelter
  (306) 525-2141
- YWCA Saskatoon
  (306) 244-2844

www.pathssk.org

Check the “News & Events” and “Training Updates” areas on the PATHS website homepage for recent media stories and upcoming training and events!

International Women’s Day
March 8th, 2014

Northeast Outreach and Support Services Walk A Mile Event
May 8th, 2014

May 27th, 2014

PATHS AGM & Board Meeting
May 28th, 2014

Regina Community Partnership Against Violence Peacemakers Breakfast
October 23rd, 2014

PATHS Conference
May, 2015 (date TBA)

Please send information about upcoming events to paths.services@sasktel.net