

PATHS NEWS

The New Social Work and Supporting Women Who Have Experienced Violence

by Diane Delaney, PATHS Coordinator

In July I was able to travel to Stockholm Sweden to present our research on *Gender, Sexual Identity and Sheltering* at the Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development. There were around 2500 social workers and policy analysts from over 100 countries presenting papers on topics relating to social work practice and social welfare policy. I would like to share some of what I learned at the conference along with my reflections on how recent research and approaches in social work affect the work we do in our shelters and services. To this end you will see a series of 3 articles in this newsletter and the upcoming ones. The first article is about indications of an emergence of a “new social work” which can guide not only social workers but also, I think, reaffirms the approaches we have been taking in the shelter movement for the past 30-plus years. The second article will be an overview of the presentations on violence against women, which was definitely one of the most common topics for workshop presentations. Third, I will tell you about the trends which are connecting social work to environmental issues. You can hear all the keynote speakers from the conference by going to <http://swsd2012.creo.tv/sunday>.

The New Social Work and Supporting Women Who Have Experienced Violence

It may be that there is a new social work emerging. It is one which calls upon us to help people in reclaiming a positive identity and to demand the institutional supports that will help them to achieve this goal. These themes of helping people in building identity and enhancing the public sphere go hand in hand and are two key elements in constructing, in

a sense, a new identity for social work.

One of the keynote speakers at the conference was Michael Marmot (a professor and a “sir”) author of *Fair Society/Healthy Lives* known as the Marmot Review, published in 2010. He had been asked by the English government to recommend the most effective evidence-based strategies for reducing health inequalities. His research showed clearly that “health inequalities result from social inequalities.” Professor Sir Marmot says we need action across 6 dimensions if we are to see improvements in health and in people’s quality of life generally. The following action is required:

1. Give every child the best start in life;
2. Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives;
3. Create fair employment and good work for all;
4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all;
5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities;
6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention.

Here are 3 specific findings from his research that made an impression on me:

- Fair employment is essential because when people are unemployed they are more likely to kill themselves and others.

- We need social protection policies because greater social welfare spending correlates with lower all-cause mortality.
- In making the point about how important early childcare and education are Professor Sir Marmot referred to a finding that a significantly higher number of people from lower socio-economic status than from higher socio-economic status said it was not important to cuddle or read to your child.

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The New Social Work— *continued*

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One of the main themes that emerged for me at the conference was this strong link between the degree to which people are able to access the necessities of life such as adequate and affordable housing, a nutritional diet, education, childcare, and employment and the quality of their lived experience, that is their overall health and mental well-being. It was evident from the information shared at the conference that people lacking these essentials experience poor health, addictions and other social problems. A case in point came across my desk as I was writing this piece. Social workers at Rutgers University demonstrated that, “Poor mothers are more likely to be classified as having the mental illness known as generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) because they live in poverty—not because they are suffering from a psychiatric disorder.” “While supportive therapy and parent skills-training are often helpful, sometimes the most appropriate intervention is financial aid and concrete services...”

Walter Lorenz, Rector of the Free University of Bozen, Italy, another speaker at the conference, says that the course we are on of dismantling the public sphere and moving responsibility for social well-being to the private sphere results in social isolation and a loss of identity. We have been led to believe that the private sphere is associated with freedom and the public sphere with control. But these are erroneous dichotomies in that we can only develop a healthy identity if we have a strong public sphere. A strong public sphere gives us a sense of belonging, of being cared for and being valued.

In this context we can develop into autonomous and creative human beings who are able to manage our lives and our environments. Lorenz says understanding this loss of identity in itself and then listening and responding in ways that give people a sense of recognition and welcome into a public realm is a step in restoring our social connections. When we see ourselves in the persons with whom we work and convey to them our common humanity we are reclaiming the social structures of solidarity which enable us to survive as individuals. Acknowledging this common humanity, regardless of the flaws that exist within each of us, is what will bring us towards social solidarity. And social work is about social solidarity says another conference speaker Malcolm Payne, Policy and Development Advisor at St Christopher's Hospice, and professor at Opole University Poland. He cites humanist philosophy which says that human beings have the capacity and creativity to build knowledge and skills that will enable them to be successful in managing their lives. But while that is the goal, to develop as capable and contributing individuals, as we learn from Marmot and Lorenz, we must have a strong public realm established through decisions made by democratically elected governments.

It is interesting to note as well that while western and developed countries are cutting back on social welfare spending, the developing world is focusing on enhancing their commitments to social welfare through increased spending and progressive policies. Chakib Benmoussa, President of the Economic and Social Council of Morocco, described the

situation in Morocco as an example of this trend. In his talk entitled, “Desirable Social Policy Consequences of the Arab Spring”, Mr. Benmoussa said that in constructing Morocco's new constitution there will be a focus on designing laws which will be grounded in a gender-based analysis, and will acknowledge ethnic diversity, allow for open communication, and address the issues of poverty and the need for social inclusion. They will take a two track approach. From the top down they will ensure a strong economy that will allow for human development. From the bottom up they will institute a national centre for human development which will ensure a decentralization of power and participation of citizens. The result, he says, will be a stronger civil society.

The lessons for us as people working with women who have experienced violence is that our clients can never be fully successful in leading safe and fulfilling lives until they feel welcomed into vibrant, democratic and generous shared spaces. For too long we, as a society, have been holding individuals responsible for their own individual success or demise without acknowledging the need for the support of culture, social relationships, social programs and a fair distribution of resources. We can, and do, make a difference in our clients' lives through acknowledging our common humanity, celebrating and understanding differences, and working together as citizens to educate our politicians and insist on the political will to restore the public realm. These are the actions that define the “new social work”. They are important lessons for us all.

*“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time.
But if you have come because your liberation is bound up
with mine, then let us work together.”*

—Lilla Watson, Aboriginal Elder, Educator, and Activist

New Programming at Battlefords Interval House

by Judy Armstrong, Shelter Worker, Battlefords Interval House

Battlefords Interval House in North Battleford now has an elder who comes in approximately once a week. A room has been designated as a cultural room for this purpose. All of our clients are really enjoying this and say they get a lot out of it. At first, some clients are not interested but

after taking part, they say that they enjoyed it and are looking forward to the next week.

We also have Catholic Family Services come in once a week to talk with the ladies. Sometimes, it is a male staff person from Catholic Family Services who visits. At first, we

were unsure how the clients would feel about working with a male counsellor, but it has been very positive and the ladies have all said that they really enjoy listening to him. As well, working with a male staff person helps to demonstrate that not all men are abusive.

Did you know?

You can call 911 from a SaskTel cell phone, even if you are out of airtime minutes or prepaid minutes.

Community Partnership Against Violence

Invites you to join us for the 11th Annual



Peacemakers Breakfast

Rose's Story: Abuse in Later Life

Featuring: Marj Thiessen, Maria Reardon, and Gerri Wood

Tuesday, October 9, 2012

from 8:30 – 10:00 am

at Regina Inn – 1975 Broad Street

Tickets \$10 each to be purchased in advance

Please contact Crystal Giesbrecht at The Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) (522-3515 or paths.services@sasktel.net) to book your tickets.

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Next PATHS Newsletter:

December 2012

Send Submissions to paths.services@sasktel.net

And in the meantime, visit us on the web:

www.abusehelplines.org



Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services



@PATHS_SK

"The best thing about the future is it only comes one day at a time."

—Abraham Lincoln

Member Agency Profile: **North East Outreach and Support Services**

by Laura Erickson & Connie Reimer, Personal Violence Counsellors

The mission of North East Outreach and Support Services (NEOSS) is to nurture personal growth and enhance wellness in people's lives and communities by providing a range of support services to northeast Saskatchewan. While our office is located in Melfort, the services are provided throughout the region.

Our services include a 24 hour crisis line. This provides information, referrals and supportive listening for any crisis situation. We offer one to one counselling for victims of sexual assault or family violence. We travel to

sub-offices throughout the Northeast to ensure services are accessible throughout the area. We have a small resource centre that offers information on a wide variety of topics. People can stop in and pick up what is of interest as well we mail information packages on request. Staff is available to provide education, awareness and prevention presentations to any group of interested people. We have developed several power points to assist with this.

We continue to work toward a shelter for the Northeast. Fundraising efforts

include the "Walk A Mile In Her Shoes" campaign. We were fortunate to have a summer student who put together a calendar. The calendar features men throughout the Northeast in red heels to help bring awareness to the community. This project created a lot of interest and involvement with the issue of violence against women. As well plans for the 4th annual Ladies Night on October 17th are being completed. Each year this event becomes more successful as women throughout the area gather to support the work of NEOSS.



Member Agency Profile: Project Safe Haven

by Jackie Gamble, Family Support Worker

It is the fundamental belief of the Yorkton Tribal Council's Project Safe Haven that violence against women and children exists in our society, and that the inequalities between men and women, which remains embedded in the social, economic, political and educational structures of society, promote this violence. This violence can take the form of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Yorkton Tribal Council Project Safe Haven works towards the elimination of violence against women and children by providing safe shelter, empowerment, support, education, and awareness of alternatives to violence.

The Yorkton Tribal Council Project Safe Haven is a safe shelter estab-

lished to address the immediate safety and support issues of women and children fleeing situations of domestic violence or abuse for Yorkton and surrounding areas since 1998.

Safe Haven provides a shelter for women and their children as well as a supportive environment and the opportunity to examine their situation and explore options that are available to them through case planning. We offer referrals and information to Legal Aid, Social Services, Mental Health, Addictions, Recovery Services, RCMP and all Band Services. Safe Haven provides awareness of alternatives to violence and we provide holistic healing and access to spiritual elders upon request. We

also offer a Children's program that is designed to help the children begin to learn about themselves by the different activities available. It can break the monotony brought on by a daily routine. Moms are encouraged to take part in their children's play time.

We are a 24 hour facility with access to a crisis line. Safe Haven has five self-contained bedrooms, laundry facility, and full kitchen. Transportation is available for clients to attend medical appointments or any other business the client needs. Follow up (counseling support) are provided to clients who leave Safe Haven.



SaskTel Phones for a Fresh Start

by Crystal Giesbrecht, Director of Member Programs & Services

PATHS partners with SaskTel to administer the *Phones for a Fresh Start* program, which provides cell phones, free of charge, to women accessing services at PATHS member agencies.

The *Phones for a Fresh Start* Program collects and recycles cell phones from SaskTel customers across the province. Proceeds from the recycling process are then used to support the program, which provides cell phone and phone cards to women who are leaving abusive relationships. PATHS Member Agencies distribute 250 cell phones, along with phone cards, per year.

Having a cell phone provides women staying in shelters with safety and security, knowing that they can call 911 if they run into danger while outside of the shelter. The cell phones continue to be a lifeline for women after they have left the shelter. Women have commented that they can breathe much easier knowing that if their former partner were to arrive at their home, they could call 911 and help would be on the way.

Some of the women who have received cell phones have never had one before, often because they were not able to afford one. Other times, women have lost their phone before coming to the shelter, sometimes because a partner has destroyed it. Women who

leave violent relationships and seek assistance at our member agencies are often facing financial difficulties, so being given a cell phone is also one less financial burden for them.

As well, for women who don't have a secure place to live, and therefore don't have landline telephones, the cell phone that they are given is their only means they have of communication.

Women in shelter need cell phones not just for safety, to call 911 if they find themselves in a dangerous situation, but also for the daily tasks required to get back on their feet. The women PATHS member agencies work with are often looking for employment as well as housing, in addition to working with lawyers and other support agencies. When a woman has her own phone, she can make and receive important calls without having to return to the shelter repeatedly to make calls and check her messages.

Women who have left shelter often use their SaskTel cell phones to keep in touch with Domestic Violence Counsellors and Outreach Workers at PATHS agencies for ongoing support.

Women staying in shelter have also had to enter potentially dangerous situations, such as stopping at relative's homes where the partner could

be. Without the phone, they couldn't call for help and staff could not call to check on them. Shelter staff often call or text clients on their cell phones to check in and make sure that they are safe if they are late returning to the shelter.

Women have reported feeling so much safer when they leave the shelter for the day, or move out to a home of their own, knowing they have a cell phone. PATHS is grateful to SaskTel for their generous support of the *Phones for a Fresh Start* program.

If you would like to donate your used cell phone, it can be dropped off in one of the collection bins, located in all SaskTel Stores. In addition, if you would like to donate your old cell phone to be recycled and cannot make it to one of the drop-off locations, you can send it to SaskTel by Priority Post Courier through Canada Post at no charge. You will not only be helping women to be safe, you will also be helping the environment by recycling.

In addition, SaskTel works with PATHS each year to publish an Abuse Help Lines page in all 10 Direct West phone books across Saskatchewan. Thanks to the generous support of SaskTel, we are able to inform Saskatchewan residents of all the services that work to help individuals and families who are experiencing violence and abuse.

211 Saskatchewan

by Barb Laing, 211 Saskatchewan Project Manager & Crystal Giesbrecht, Director of Member Programs & Services

PATHS sits on the Implementation Advisory Committee for 211 Saskatchewan, which is an initiative of the United Way Regina and United Way Saskatoon and Area.

211 is an easy-to-remember, three-digit, non-emergency telephone number that connects callers to a full range of community, social, government and health service information. It is free, confidential, multilingual and available 24 hours a day. Calls are answered by a trained Information and Referral Specialist who assesses the caller's need and refers them to the best service available. The database that supports 211 is available on the Internet, allowing users (Human Service Providers and the public) to find their own way to programs and services, if they choose.

In Canada, approximately 60 % of Canadians have access to 211. Both

Nova Scotia and the North (provinces and territories) are actively setting up their Information on a 211 Database. In the United States, 85 percent of the population does.

It can be confusing knowing where to call for assistance if you aren't sure what services might be available. 211 eliminates this confusion by connecting callers to a trained Information and Referral Specialist and/or also providing a comprehensive listing of community services on the internet.

211 Saskatchewan is currently under development. The 211 service will be available province-wide, providing information and referral to every citizen regardless of location, culture, language or circumstance. Whether one lives in an urban centre, a rural farming community or on a First Nation reserve, 211 will be available.

211 Saskatchewan will benefit individual citizens, families, service agencies, corporations and the community as a whole by improving access to services, supporting Saskatchewan's Aboriginal population, supporting immigrants and refugees, supporting the voluntary sector, providing support for emergency preparedness, building a healthier, more productive workforce, and relieving pressure on 911 by off-loading non-emergency calls and calls for information.

Currently, the database and website that support the 211 service in Saskatchewan are being created and will be launched to Human Service Providers by March 31st 2013. A public launch will follow when the Human Service providers are confident with the database. The telephone service will be the next phase and launched in 2014.



Women in Parliament

by Diane Delaney, PATHS Coordinator

Every so often I like to check in to see how many women are running the world. While we are creative in the ways in which we provide leadership, the sites being numerous and varied, one of the indicators of our participation in decision-making is the percentage of women elected to a country's government. Below is the top 10 list for 2011. As well, Senegal recently held an election and they are at 42.6.

Country	Seats in National Parliament (%)
Andorra (near France and Spain)	53.6
Rwanda	50.9
Sweden	45
Cuba	43.2
Iceland	42.9
South Africa	42.7
Finland	42.5
Norway	39.6
Mozambique	39.2
Angola and Costa Rica	38.6
World	17.7
Canada	24.9

AFN Resolution: Missing Indigenous Women and Girls

by Crystal Giesbrecht, Director of Member Programs & Services

Over the last two decades, hundreds of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and girls have gone missing in Canada. While some have safely returned home, many remain missing, and many others have been found murdered.

In Saskatchewan, 60 per cent of long-term missing women are Indigenous, though Indigenous women make up only 6 per cent of Saskatchewan's population.

Canadian Statistics report that Aboriginal women experience violence at a rate of 3.5 times higher than non-Aboriginal women, but this number is believed to underestimate the number of victims, considering that more than 600 Indigenous women have been murdered in Canada in the last 20 years, or have been missing for so long that it is feared they are deceased. In the absence of accurate national statistics, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has created an ongoing list of missing and murdered women.

According to Amnesty International, extreme poverty, racism, and marginalization increase Indigenous women's risk of experiencing violence. A 2009 Amnesty International report lists five key areas that lead to the continuing inequality experienced by Indigenous women in Canada: the role of racism and misogyny in violence against Indigenous women; disparities in Indigenous women's economic, social, political and cultural rights; effects on Indigenous communities caused by the historic and ongoing mass removal of children from their families and communities; the disproportionately high number of Indigenous women in Canadian prisons; and inadequate police responses to violence against Indigenous women.

While the federal government has acknowledged the gravity of the situation, not enough has been done to work toward ending the violence. At

their Annual General Assembly this July, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) put forth a resolution titled *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada, 2012*. The resolution calls on the Canadian government to establish an independent public commission of inquiry to investigate the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada and to convene a Royal Commission to make concrete and specific recommendations to end violence against Indigenous women and girls. This resolution also demands that the federal government support initiatives and programs that promote public awareness and do advocacy work and research on violence against Indigenous women; restore funding to NWAC for maintenance of a national database on missing and murdered Indigenous women; and, ensure proper facilities and services are available within communities for those whom are victims or have lost their loved ones through acts of violence.

While this issue was not visited at the Canadian premiers' Council of the Federation meeting that took place in July following the AFN General Assembly, the premiers promised to examine the issue of violence against Indigenous women at their fall meeting.

The RCMP has stated that a National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains will be created as part of Canadian Police Centre for Missing and Exploited Children in 2013. It has been stated that an experienced Aboriginal police officer will work to ensure a focus on missing Indigenous people. In addition, the RCMP will launch a national public website containing information on missing persons and cases of unidentified remains, which will allow the public to offer tips, later this year. While these are much anticipated advancements in the work being done to end the violence against Indigenous women, AFN chiefs are also lobbying

for a national, integrated Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and police task force on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. The AFN would like to see coordination between police departments, as well as First Nations' and government officials.

The AFN resolution also called for a *National Day of Action* on missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to take place on October 18, 2012, in addition to designating October 4th as an annual *National Day of Remembrance* on which all First Nation governments and communities will join in Sisters in Spirit Candlelight Vigils. Vigils are regularly held in communities across Canada on October 4th to honour the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Visit the NWAC website (www.nwac.ca/programs/sis-vigils) to find a vigil in or around your community, or register to host a vigil in your community.

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The Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan



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Member Agencies

Battlefords Interval House
(306) 445-2742

Envision Counselling and Support Centre
Weyburn (306) 842-8821
Estevan (306) 637-4004

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

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

Regina YWCA Isabel Johnson Shelter
(306) 525-2141

Saskatoon Interval House
(306) 244-0185

Saskatoon YWCA
(306) 244-2844

Shelwin House
(306) 783-7233

SOFIA House
(306) 565-2537

Southwest Crisis Services
(306) 778-3692

Waskoosis Safe Shelter
(306) 236-5570

West Central Family Support Centre
(306) 463-6655

WISH Safe House
(306) 543-0493

Upcoming Events

September 16- 19	Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses <i>Uniting to End Violence Against Women: Collaborating, Educating & Innovating to Shape Our Future</i> 1st National Leadership Forum	Montréal	http://endvaw.ca/forum2012
October 4	Sisters in Spirit Vigils	Canada-wide	www.nwac.ca/programs/sis-vigils
October 9	Community Partners Against Violence 11th Annual Peacemaker's Breakfast	Regina	http://abusehelplines.org/2012/08/17/cpav-breakfast-tickets-on-sale-now/
October 9- 13	Get Active with Amnesty Saskatchewan Regional Conference	Regina	http://getactivewithamnesty2012.wordpress.com/conference/
October 19	RESOLVE Research Day	Regina	http://www.uregina.ca/resolve/
October 24- 25	STOPS 2012 Fall Member Gathering	Saskatoon	http://www.stopstoviolence.com/contact_stops.html
November 28- 29	PATHS Board Meeting	Regina	
April 30- May 2, 2012	PATHS Shelter & Service Workers' Conference	Moose Jaw	