



## Spousal Violence in Aboriginal Families

The following is a direct excerpt from the article Violent Victimization of Aboriginal People in the Canadian Provinces, written by Samuel Perreault. The report was released March 11, 2011 by Statistics Canada and uses data from the 2009 The General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, which looked at violence that occurred in the five years preceding the survey. It is important to note that while spousal violence may involve many types of violent crime or abuse, the GSS only collects information on incidents of spousal violence that involve sexual or physical assault.

Aboriginal people were almost twice as likely as non-Aboriginal people to report being a victim of spousal violence. As is the case with non-spousal violence, Aboriginal people who had a spouse or common-law partner in the last five years were more likely than non-Aboriginal people to report being the victim of a sexual or physical assault by their spouse. Aboriginal people (10%) were almost twice as

likely (6%) to report being a victim of spousal violence in the five years preceding the survey (see chart below)

Aboriginal women, in particular, were at greater risk than non-Aboriginal women of being victims of spousal violence. About 15% of Aboriginal women who had a spouse or common-law partner in the past five years reported being a victim of spousal violence, more than twice the proportion among non-Aboriginal women (6%).

Not only were Aboriginal people more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be physically or sexually assaulted by a spouse or partner (current or former), they were also more likely to report having been victimized multiple times. More than half (59%) of Aboriginal victims of spousal violence reported being victimized more than once in the past five years and 50% reported being victimized more than three times. In comparison, 43% of non-Aboriginal victims reported being victim-

ized more than once and 29% more than three times.

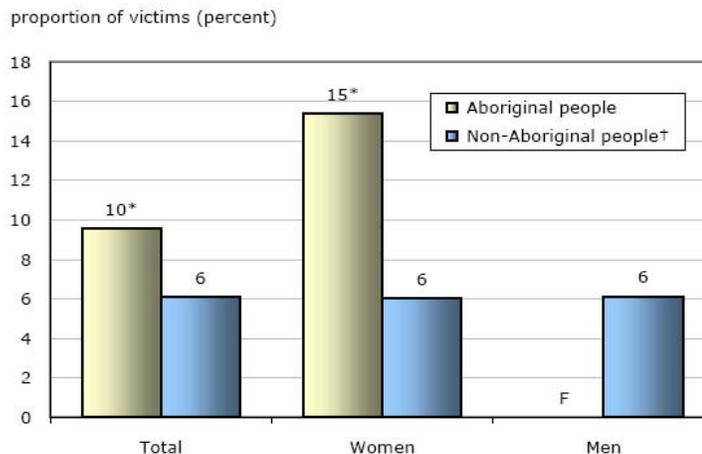
Aboriginal victims of spousal violence were more likely than other Aboriginal people to be victims of non-spousal violence. Aboriginal people who self-reported spousal violence were also about three times more likely than other Aboriginal people to have been the victim of a non-spousal violent crime.

Aboriginal victims of spousal violence were also more likely than non-Aboriginal victims to report suffering the most serious forms of spousal violence. More specifically, Aboriginal victims were nearly twice as likely to report being hit with an object, beaten, strangled, threatened or assaulted with a firearm or a knife, or forced to engage in an unwanted sexual act (60% versus 33% for non-Aboriginal people). Proportionally, twice as many Aboriginal victims as non-Aboriginal victims said they were injured (57% versus 29%), and more than twice as many said they feared for their lives (48% versus 18%).

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**Self-reported spousal victimizations in the preceding 5 years, Canada's ten provinces, 2009**



† reference category \* significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05) F too unreliable to be published **Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

## Featured Member Agency: Southwest Safe Shelter

The Southwest Safe Shelter, which is located in Swift Current, has been in operation since March 1989, and serves the region of southwest Saskatchewan. The Safe Shelter is a five-bedroom facility with 24-hour staffing. The Shelter Support Workers provide crisis counselling, in-house support and referral services in person and by telephone.

The Shelter is one of the programs of Southwest Crisis Services, which was formed in October 1984, as a result of a merger of Swift Current Sexual Assault & Information Centre, and the Southwest Action Group for Battered Women.

Over the years, Southwest Crisis Services has expanded programming and services in a number of areas. The initial services—the 24-Hour Crisis Line and the Safe Shelter—continue to provide support to individuals in our area of the province. The establishment of Genesis House has meant that there is affordable long-term housing available for the women and their children who are still at risk after their stay at the Shelter.

The Women's, Men's and Children's Outreach programs provide for confidential one-on-one support and counselling. Support groups have been conducted, under the outreach pro-

grams, whenever the need is identified. We also offer schools the opportunity to invite us to make presentations through our Violence Prevention Program. The objective of this program is to have children and youth gain the tools needed to develop healthy relationships.

Our Career Closet, housed at the Shelter, makes quality clothing available to women of all ages, for a job interview, for work or to attend an educational program. Because of the generosity of the community, Southwest Crisis Services, through the Household Donations Program, is able to assist families who must set up new households.

## Featured Member Agency: Saskatoon Interval House & Adelle House

Saskatoon Interval House and Adelle House continue to provide our mandated services and we are presently running at 80% capacity at Interval House and 100% at Adelle House. The lack of appropriate and affordable housing for our residents continues to be a huge problem in Saskatoon as it is everywhere.

Interval House commemorates 40 years of service next year—hard to believe—and we are busy making preparations for this event. Planning and fine tuning on a limited budget is some-

times a little hectic but we have a resourceful staff who always contribute wholeheartedly. The Women's Program, the Children's Program and the Adelle House Program continue to provide our clients with quality services. However the fun stuff such as Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day festivities brightens up the daily routine.

The community continues to support us with their generous monetary and non-monetary gifts. We certainly appreciate their community spirit and gratefully accept the donations as they

benefit our residents.

Most of the staff have expressed an interest in attending the PATHS conference in May, 2011. The keynote speaker is a draw as well as the recreational part of the conference.

Shelter work is a very necessary component to a healthier society as are the other services who deal in domestic violence resolves.

Thank you to all for being part of this network.

— Sharon Cunningham,  
Executive Director

*In 2009, rates of spousal homicide against women were one-third of the levels in 1979. Even so, women were more than twice as likely as men to be killed by a spouse in 2009.— Statistics Canada, 2011*

## PATHS Update

At PATHS, we are busy preparing for our 2011 Shelter Workers Conference, *Modeling and Mentoring: Creating the Supportive Relationships That Lead to Non-Violent Communities* which will be held May 17-19 in Regina. We have some great speakers, workshops, and entertainment lined up and we know that this will be both a fun and educational experience for staff of our member agencies.

As well, we are still recruiting mentors for the *Modeling and Mentoring* pilot project that is a joint venture between PATHS and Regina Transition House. If you know of any women who have experienced intimate partner abuse and now live free from abuse that would be interested in spending time in a supportive relationship with a woman who has recently stayed at Regina Transition House, please refer them to *Kim Fellner, Outreach Program Coordinator at Regina Transition House, at 757-2096 ext.227.*



## International Support for Acid and Burn Survivors

by Crystal Giesbrecht & Gary Harding

Acid and burn violence are world-wide phenomena that are not restricted to a particular race, religion or geographical location. Acid and burn violence often occur as a severe form of domestic violence and are most often directed at women, but children are often collateral damage (for example, acid has been thrown on women who were holding their children at the time, causing the children to also be terribly burned). Men are also among the victims.

Acid violence is the deliberate use of acid to attack another person. Acid is readily available in many countries in South-East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the West Indies and the Middle East, as it is used in manufacturing and processing cotton and rubber and to clean rust from metal in the jewellery making industry. In the countries where acid violence frequently occurs, the problem is exacerbated by weak rule of law, political corruption and gender inequality. Perpetrators are rarely punished, and even when they are, the sentence is rarely strong enough to discourage others from using acid to settle their grievances.

Burn violence often occurs in

those countries where access to acid is not readily available. The use of kerosene and gas are often used in these attacks. The needs for medical and psychological care for victims of burn violence are the same as those attacked by acid.

Perpetrators frequently throw highly corrosive acid over the head, face and neck in order to disfigure and blind their victims. Acid has a devastating effect on the human body, often permanently blinding the victim and denying them the use of their hands. As a consequence, many everyday tasks such as working and even mothering are rendered extremely difficult if not impossible. Though some victims of acid violence die from their injuries, the vast majority of attacks are not fatal and victims are confronted with ongoing, excruciating pain as well psychological trauma, and can face social ostracism from their communities. Victims are often left with no legal recourse, limited access to medical or psychological assistance, and without the means to support themselves.

Victims of acid and burn violence are attacked for many reasons, and the patterns of attack vary

from country to country. Sometimes they result from domestic or land disputes, dowry demands or revenge. In many cases they are a form of gender based violence, often because a young girl or woman spurned sexual advances or rejected a marriage proposal. Acid violence has also been perpetrated by women, against other women, due to jealousy over a husband or a boyfriend.

*International Support for Acid and Burn Survivors* (ISABS) is a Registered Canadian Charity that provides support to clinics (Acid Survivors Foundations, ASFs) in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cambodia, Uganda and Nepal. The role of ISABS is to fundraise and allocate much needed funds to the ASFs; to support the victims directly; as well as providing much needed funding to offset operational costs by supporting local in-country initiatives such as awareness campaigns, conferences, social reintegration for victims back into their communities, legal support, and ongoing monitoring and research.

For more information:  
[www.isabs.org](http://www.isabs.org)  
 (Website will be up and running in Spring 2011)

*"I can honestly say that I was never affected by the question of success of an undertaking. If I felt it was the right thing to do, I was for it regardless of the possible outcome."*—  
 Golda Meir



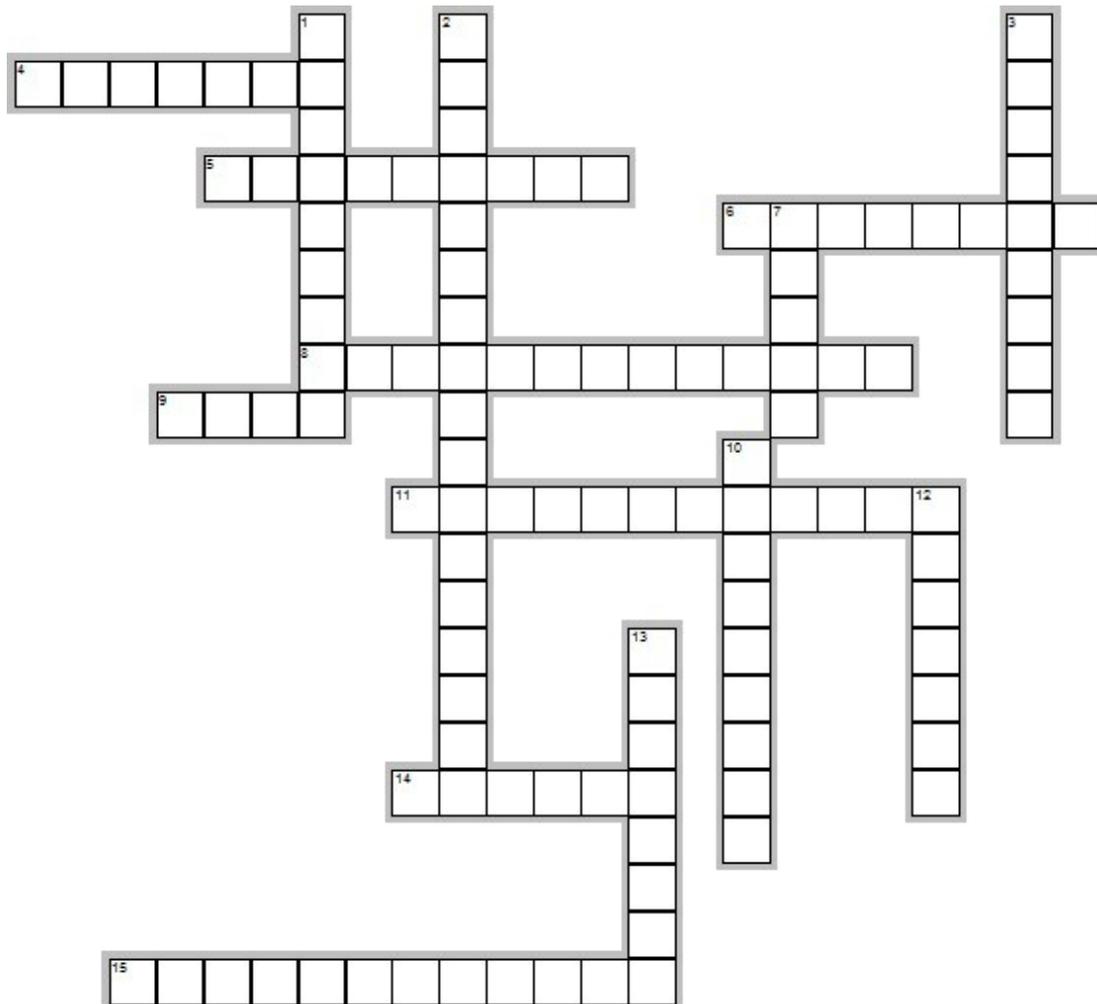
## Interpersonal Violence Crossword

### Down

1. Since 2000, abuse of women by boyfriends has \_\_\_\_\_.
2. An order that can require the perpetrator to pay the victim compensation for monetary loss suffered as a result of the abuse, including the cost of temporary accommodation or legal expenses.
3. Domestic violence often begins during \_\_\_\_\_.
7. According to Statistics Canada, people aged 25 to 34 years old were \_\_\_\_\_ times more likely than those aged 45 and older to state that they had been physically or sexually assaulted by their spouse.
10. Abuse that involves forcing the victim to be dependent on the abuser by cutting off their access to and control of money.
12. This movement began in Italy in 1563 when a convent began hiding women from their batterers.
13. Using force or intimidation to gain compliance.

### Across

4. The total economic impact of domestic violence in Canada is approximately \$4.2 \_\_\_\_\_ per year.
5. Type of therapy that seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to counselling and community work, which centres people as the experts in their own lives.
6. Continually calling the victim or showing up at her place of work.
8. Includes responsible parenting, respect, negotiation, and fairness.
9. The acronym for an anxiety disorder that develops in some people after extremely traumatic events.
11. Persons of any age with physical or intellectual \_\_\_\_\_ are at increased risk of abuse.
14. A trusted and experienced person who is able to provide support by sharing life experiences and assisting in acquiring and adopting new skills.
15. There are on average 5000 incidences of spousal violence against women reported in \_\_\_\_\_ each year.



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Battlefords Interval House (306) 445-2742	Regina YWCA Isabel Johnson Shelter (306) 525-2141
Envision Counselling and Support Centre Weyburn (306) 637-4004 Estevan 842-8821	Saskatoon Interval House (306) 244-0185
Hudson Bay Family and Support Centre (306) 865-3064	Saskatoon YWCA (306) 244-2844
Moose Jaw Transition House (306) 693-6511	Shelwin House (306) 783-7233
North East Outreach and Support Services (306) 752-9464	SOFIA House (306) 565-2537
Prince Albert Safe Shelter for Women (306) 764-7233	Southwest Crisis Services (306) 778-3692
Piwapan Women's Centre (306) 425-3900	Waskoosis Safe Shelter (306) 236-5570
Project Safe Haven (306) 782-0676	West Central Family Support Centre (306) 463-6655
Qu'Appelle Safe Haven Shelter (306) 322-6881	WISH Safe House (306) 543-0493
Regina Transition House (306) 757-2096	

Visit the PATHS website at  
[www.abusehelplines.org](http://www.abusehelplines.org)

## In the News: *Excerpts from Local and National News Stories*

Social Services Minister June Draude announced details today of a five-point action plan to add at least 4,600 new housing units over the next five years and make it easier for Saskatchewan people with modest incomes to purchase new homes. Total investments in housing from these five initiatives over the next five years will be more than \$252 million. The Saskatchewan Advantage Housing Plan includes five housing initiatives, including: Headstart on a Home; The Affordable Home Ownership Program; Rental Construction Incentive; \$34 Million Investment in Rental Housing; and a partnership with Habitat for Humanity.



The Winnipeg Street Health Report was released at the start of April. This report is the first of its kind, and looks at the lives of 300 of Winnipeg's homeless people (90 women and 210 men). The report also looks at the level of violence affecting homeless people, with 20 per cent of women reporting sexual assaults in the past year. "When you read the media often, it's talking about how homeless people are perpetrators of crime, but I think

anyone who works with homeless people knows that homeless people are way more often victims of crime," said Christina Maes, a University of Manitoba graduate student in city planning and the report's lead researcher. "Women who are homeless don't have a safe place to go... sometimes they're working in the sex trade or sometimes they just don't have a safe place. "They're victimized in shelters, they're victimized on the street, they're victimized by people who are offering them a safe place to stay. Not having the resources to have a safe home puts them at risk of violence," she added. The threat of injury and violence isn't limited to sexual assaults. The report says: "Violence and assault are a regular part of life when you're homeless," with 40 per cent of the survey's respondents saying they were physically assaulted in the past year.



Manitoba Justice Robert Dewar received criticism after his controversial decision to sentence a rapist to two-year, curfew-bound conditional sentence in the community. While the victim testified that she feared for her life during the violent and

extensive attack, Justice Dewar called the perpetrator "a clumsy Don Juan" and the incident a case of "misunderstood signals" and "inconsiderate behaviour." In response to this outrageous decision, Manitoba columnist Gordon Sinclair Jr. stated "if anger, confusion and frustration are the most common emotional responses for someone who has been sexually assaulted, now the public at large has an idea how a rape victim feels".



Belize is currently participating in a two week domestic violence and sexual offences training course in Ottawa. The training began at the start of April and will be conducted at the Ottawa police services department. The training is part of a wider initiative by the Barbados-based UN WOMEN group to assist participating countries in ending gender-based violence. The officers will undergo training in the Management of Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence which include a focus on sexual and intimate partner assault, legal issues around domestic violence, the judicial response, victim support and domestic violence investigation procedures.

Please send your submissions for the June 2011 newsletter to Crystal ([paths.services@sasktel.net](mailto:paths.services@sasktel.net)) by May 24th.