

## **Community Outreach Program**

The outreach programs are based in Montague, Charlottetown, Summerside and O'Leary and are the community based services of PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc. The primary goal of the program is to reach possible victims of domestic violence who may not use the services of the shelter, but still need some education and safety planning surrounding issues of domestic violence.

The outreach program is a vital component in a comprehensive service system for victims of domestic violence, especially for those who still live with their abusers and for those who have left the relationship but who can benefit from counseling, support, and advocacy services. Post-shelter follow-up services can enhance the probability of a victim's successful transition to a violence-free lifestyle.

By assisting victims earlier in the cycle of violence, outreach services can reduce the need for more shelter services and stimulate long-term benefits for victims and their children. With an early intervention/prevention focus, outreach services delivered in local communities offer a cost-effective and less disruptive alternative to serving the high percentage of domestic violence victims who are not currently in imminent physical danger, and who seek support in reducing or eliminating the abuse in their lives.

The goals of the Outreach Program are to:

- Ensure a victim's safety.
- Help victims understand the dynamics of domestic violence (concepts such as the "cycle of violence" and "power and control").
- Assist victims in identifying and dealing with their feelings by exploring available options to help them improve their situation.
- Provide practical information regarding resources.
- Support and promote a victim's ability to make her own choices.

### **Support to Individuals and Families:**

Outreach workers provide support to women and their families in the following manner:

- One-on-one crisis intervention for victims of domestic violence, via phone or in person.
- Support groups for victims that explore the dynamics of domestic violence.
- Referral services for victims about organizations in the community that can help them with their individual needs. These may include but are not limited to information about: shelters, counseling, legal aid, child care, income support, addictions, mental health, housing, medical needs, financial counseling, job/career counseling, and the court system.
- Safety assessment and planning, including helping the victim develop her own safety plan.
- Provide comprehensive case management.
- Individual and group paraprofessional counseling.
- Accompaniment to court and other meetings as required.

**Public Education:** Our outreach coordinators are available to provide presentations on the subject of domestic violence to organizations across the province. These presentations are available to a variety of organizations such as local businesses, hospitals, government agencies, schools, the legal system, police, service clubs, volunteers, and concerned citizens about domestic violence and its effect on a community. Training is also provided to professionals who would like more education about domestic violence and the services that the organization provides.

**Community Networking:** The outreach coordinators participate in a variety of committees and partnerships throughout the province regarding the issue of domestic violence. Some of the committees and partnerships currently include, Safety Circle Committees, Youth Justice Committee, Summerside Safe City Committee, and Youth Homelessness Initiative Forum, Justice Options Committee and Victim Services Committee.