

PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc

Statement of Beliefs

We believe that:

- Family violence constitutes any abusive, violent, coercive, forceful, or threatening act or word.
- It is a basic human right to live free from and without fear of abuse.
- Family violence is a serious and unacceptable act that transcends all class, cultural and ethnic boundaries. It is a social problem, not “just” a private matter. Therefore, all levels of government and society must share the responsibility to eliminate family violence and provide protection to family members under the law.
- Existing and future legislation involving family violence must:
 - provide for the safety of victims/survivors
 - be enforced
 - provide for sentences which are proportional to the harm caused by the offense committed
- Children’s lives are traumatized by exposure to abusive environments. When children witness and normalize abuse, the cycle of abuse is perpetuated. Their needs are specific and distinct from the needs of their parents.
- Children need not be present to suffer from the effects of family violence.
- No one should be forced to remain in a violent or abusive situation because of lack of alternatives.
- Because a woman has a right to integrity of her person, this includes her right to make informed choices, including choices about reproduction, in her life decisions.
- Abuse that arises in relationships is used as a form of control. Abuse is one form of demonstrating power over another through this control. Abuse is learned behavior.
- The power differential between women and men has historical roots. Traditions, laws, and attitudes favour men and therefore work against women in our society. One result is the abuse of women. Every attempt must be made to eliminate these differentials.
- Some groups - e.g., immigrants, aboriginals, gays & lesbians, visible minorities, people with disabilities, people with low income - face double oppression because of discrimination.
- Society must provide support for public education, prevention programs, early intervention, crisis response and support services.
- Front line workers in shelters and outreach programs are experts in the field of family violence.
- Victims/Survivors are central to and must be consulted in the development of programs and legislation on family violence issues.