



NORTH BAY POLICE SERVICE

2008 Annual Report Victim Assistance & Domestic Violence Coordinator

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A. Mandate of the Unit

The Victim Assistance / Domestic Violence Coordinator's mandate is to implement and maintain programs to ensure the North Bay Police Service provides comprehensive and efficient services to victims of crime and tragic circumstances.

The unit also provides follow-up assistance to victims by coordinating the response of all Service Sections with involved community agencies.

The Domestic Violence Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the response to, and investigation of domestic violence occurrences, including compliance with the service's Standard Operating Procedures.

B. Executive Summary

This unit has made substantial progress during the past year in addressing the current and future needs of the North Bay Police Service in the area of victim services and domestic violence investigations. This year was a transitional year with a new Victim Assistance Domestic Violence Coordinator entering the unit. The Coordinator has been busy developing the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities associated to the mandate of this unit. In doing this, the coordinator participated in several conferences, seminars and committee's which allowed for learning and employee development, strong partnerships with local community partners and an enhanced understanding of victims issues.

The Victim Assistance Domestic Violence Coordinator will continue to make an effort to provide victims with a consistent, coordinated, comprehensive and seamless response to their needs in the upcoming year. Continued monitoring and education in relation to domestic violence investigations will also be emphasized in 2009.

C. Activities

Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (DVCC) of Nipissing is a multi-disciplinary, advisory committee formed in 1998 to effectively address domestic violence in the District of Nipissing.

The DVCC is a community wide partnership set up to prevent, respond to and eliminate domestic violence. The committee sets out to develop and facilitate the implementation of a coordinated, effective response to the identification, assessment, response and prevention of domestic violence.

The DVCC also maintains a strong focus in other areas including: enhancing the quality of service delivery to victims of domestic violence, their children and abusers; improving the community's overall response to domestic violence; developing, implementing and

monitoring local policies, procedures and protocols; and ongoing prevention and education efforts.

This committee is currently working on a document which covers the following five topics; Vision, Mission and Mandate, DVCC Goals, Guiding Principles and Membership and Structure of the DVCC. A draft copy of this document has been distributed to the membership for review. The purpose of the document entitled "The Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee of Nipissing: Creating Community Partnerships to Prevent, Respond to and Eliminate Domestic Violence", is to improve our overall response to domestic violence through improved collaboration and communication and to establish a more consistent response to victims, perpetrators and their children.

The Domestic Violence Coordinator attended and participated in the monthly meetings and on-going projects of the above committee.

The Education Sub-committee

This committee is comprised of a small enthusiastic working group of members from the Coordinating Committee, including the North Bay Police Service Domestic Violence Coordinator.

On February 20th and 21st 2008 this committee hosted a conference held at Nipissing University, entitled "Do You See It?" This conference was directed at agencies outside the 'violence against women' sector. It was intended to reach out to individuals who have contact with women who are, or may be in violent relationships, in an attempt to help them recognize domestic violence and how they can assist. This conference received great reviews from those who attended.

Neighbours, Friends and Families

Neighbours, Friends and Families is a province wide campaign to raise awareness to the signs of abuse for people who are closest to women at risk and abusive men. On January 19th 2008, this campaign was formally launched at Northgate Square in North Bay and attended by Chief Paul Cook. As a result of this initiative the Coordinator has obtained valuable resources which are available free of charge at our police service. They include pamphlets, information cards, videos and public service announcements.

A Provincial Conference: Communities Working Together to End Violence Against Women

On February 25th-27th 2008, the Coordinator attended the above conference held at Bingemans Conference Centre, Kitchener. This was a provincial conference aimed at exploring leading-edge approaches to eliminating violence against women.

Early Victim Contact in Domestic Violence Cases by the Victim/Witness Assistance Program

In April 2008, The Ministry of the Attorney General implemented the above initiative whereby V/WAP will attempt to contact domestic violence victims within one working day following notification of the offence by the North Bay Police Service. They will explain the Domestic Violence Court program, address victims concerns about safety and involvement with the criminal justice system, provide referrals and resources, and provide accurate case related information. Where contact is made prior to Bail court, they will seek victim input on Bail conditions and provide victim input to the Crown prior to Bail Hearing. The Coordinator provided training on this initiative to officers and facilitated the necessary exchange of information with V/WAP.

Manitoulin Northshore Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service Conference

On April 17th-18th 2008, the Coordinator attended a conference entitled "Through the Eyes of a Victim". This conference was held in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island. This was an excellent conference. At times there was not a dry eye in the audience as we listened to the many stories of survival.

Domestic Violence Coordinators Advisory Group

This group was developed by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services – Policing Services Division. The Domestic Violence Coordinator attends quarterly meetings, which is comprised of several police services from the Province.

The Group was established to provide advice to the Ministry regarding professional police practices specific to domestic violence in Ontario, and to act as a forum where potential areas of concern can be discussed and recommendations for action made.

It was developed to promote a coordinated, effective police response on a provincial level, to domestic violence cases by facilitating information sharing among domestic violence coordinators on best practices and initiatives. As a group provincial issues are discussed and problem solving techniques are utilized to enhance services to victims. This group also facilitates the exchange of information between police services and the Ministry when developing domestic violence policies and/or making changes to the guidelines.

Currently the group is working on the 4th annual Domestic Violence Coordinators' conference, a review of the Domestic Violence Supplementary Report as well as a Quick Guide on domestic violence investigations for police officers.

Domestic Violence, Harm Reduction and Homicide Prevention – the Power of Many

On April 7th-9th 2009, the Coordinator attended the 3rd annual Domestic Violence Coordinators' Conference held at the Ontario Police College. This conference was a

great success. We heard from many interesting and informative speakers. Mr. Yasir Naqvi, Parliamentary Assistant, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Mr. Brian Vallee, author of "The War on Women", Mr. Dave Franklin, "Relationship Terrorism", lecturer and former National Coordinator on Violence and Victims Issues and Dr. Stephen Hart, professor of psychology, Simon Fraser University.

Mino Bimawdiziwin, (Good Life, Anishinabe) Honouring the Voices of Children

On April 23rd 2008, the Coordinator attended the Indian Friendship Centre and participated in a presentation from the Native Healing Services Inc., London Ontario. Mino Bimawdiziwin utilizes the *Seven Grandfather Teachings*, with art, play and music therapies to create safe environments that complement healing opportunities for children who are exposed to unbalanced relationships. This was a great learning experience that provided insight into the culture and healing methods of our native community.

Other

The Coordinator had ongoing contact with victims regarding court procedures, assisted with updates regarding court and investigations, answered questions, relayed information to investigating officers and provided referrals to other agencies.

The Coordinator attended court as a support for victims, and assisted victims with obtaining information related to Criminal Injuries Compensation Claims.

On January 9th 2008, the Coordinator submitted a letter of recognition in relation to Glen McLean for his involvement on May 11th 2005, when he intervened and stopped a serious crime in progress, potentially preventing a homicide from occurring in our city. His immediate action on that date allowed officers to link the accused to investigations in the Ottawa/Gatineau area; the most prominent case being that of the Homicide of Ardeth Wood. Mr. Glen McLean was recognized for bravery by Board Chair Mr. Chirico and North Bay Police Chief Cook at the January 22, 2008 Police Services Board Meeting.

On October 28th 2008, the Coordinator assisted Nipissing University's Women's Centre who was hosting the sixth annual Take Back the Night March. The event was an opportunity for the community to advocate for an end to violence against women and children.

In November of 2008, the North Bay Police Service entered into a trial project with Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service (VCARS). This initiative will focus on providing a seamless response between police and victim services in relation to domestic violence calls. VCARS staff and volunteers will be responding to call outs related to domestic violence investigations upon notification that a victim will be attending the North Bay Police Headquarters to provide a statement to police. Once officers have completed their investigation with the victim, VCARS will be present and ready to offer assistance to the victim. This project will be reviewed on May 1st 2009.

Training

The Coordinator along with the SupportLink Coordinator conducted several information sessions with women at the Community Counselling Centre, Woman's Program.

Elder Abuse training was provided to two agencies within our community at their request.

The Coordinator assisted in the training of new volunteers with the Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services in the area of Domestic Violence.

Domestic Violence front line training was provided to members of the North Bay Police Service in the form of a DVD designed to reinforce existing training initiatives and explore some of the new and often complex issues facing first responders.

Updates were made to the Domestic Violence Supplementary Report completed by officers upon charge in domestic violence investigations. Training on the new form was conducted with service members.

On September 16th-19th 2008, four Supervisors from the North Bay Police Service attended the Ministry accredited Domestic Violence Investigators Course. This course designates individuals as trained domestic violence investigators. These investigators have the primary responsibility for undertaking, managing or reviewing the investigation of domestic violence occurrences.

D. Performance Indicators

Referrals to Partner Agencies

VCARS – 47

V/WAP – 392

Community Care Access Centre – 3

Seniors Mental Health - 4

Number of New Partnerships and Sustained Partnerships

Sustained –19

New – 3

Number of New Initiatives

VCARS – 1 (domestic call outs)

E. Anticipated Issues for the Future

N/A

F. Performance Objectives for the Next Year

1. To host a Domestic Violence Conference in February 2009 with fellow members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee of Nipissing.
2. To continue to provide learning opportunities to supervisors and front line officers in the area of domestic violence investigations.
3. To review and report on, on-going initiatives with outside agencies and community partners.
4. To continue strong ties with community partners.

G. Other

N/A

H. Appendices

N/A