



# **NORTH BAY POLICE SERVICE**

## **2009 Annual Report Victim Assistance & Domestic Violence Coordinator**

---

**Report Date: 2010/01/01  
Author: Constable Melodee Prevost**

## **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, consisting of one sworn officer, 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. The Coordinator has continued to develop 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 efforts to provide victims with a consistent, coordinated, comprehensive and seamless response to their needs in the upcoming year. Monitoring and education initiatives both internally and externally in relation to domestic violence investigations will continue to be emphasized in 2010.

## **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.

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 26 & 27, 2009 the committee hosted an awards dinner and educational conference held at the Clarion Resort. The awards dinner was to recognize and pay special tribute to professionals in the medical and policing field who have shown a commitment and dedication to the service of those affected by domestic violence. Constable Stacy Jackson of our police service was one of four police recipients honoured. The conference offered interesting and knowledgeable speakers from the police and medical professions. The keynote speaker, retired Lieutenant Mark Wynn from Nashville TN, encouraged the audience of law enforcement, medical professionals and advocates to recognize their own abilities to make a difference. He highlighted new ways of working together to assist victims of violence. The awards dinner and educational conference received great reviews from those who attended.

### Domestic Violence Coordinators Advisory Committee

This group was developed by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services – Policing Services Division and is comprised of several police services from the Province. The Domestic Violence Coordinator attended quarterly meetings of this committee which 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 police response on a provincial level for domestic violence cases by facilitating information sharing among domestic violence coordinators on best practices and initiatives, discuss provincial issues and engage in problem solving techniques to enhance services to victims by police and the community. The committee 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 5<sup>th</sup> annual Domestic Violence Coordinators' Conference, a review of the Domestic Violence Supplementary Report, and a Quick Guide on domestic violence investigations for police officers.

### Seniors @ Risk Network

The main purpose of this committee is to work together to reduce the risk of elder abuse in our community. The goals of the Network include; raising awareness in our community through annual educational conferences, develop educational protocols within our agencies and provide educational sessions to community members, empower seniors in our community to not be victimized by abuse and establish contact information for seniors who require further information or education regarding abuse. The Coordinator attends regular monthly meetings of this group that is comprised of community partners, government agencies and officials.

On June 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Network hosted a senior's "Well Being Day" at the Davedi Club. This event was well attended and the Network received positive feedback from those who participated. The Network is currently planning a professional conference to be held in June 2010.

### Enhancing the Response to Domestic Violence Conference, Domestic Abuse Review Team Muskoka, ON

On March 26<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Coordinator attended the above conference held in Port Carling. The purpose of Domestic Abuse Review Team (D.A.R.T.) is to track cases of domestic abuse within the justice system and to monitor, via discussion amongst participants, the effective handling of these cases, including monitoring of intervention by various agencies. The conference hosted by Muskoka D.A.R.T provided sessions on safety planning for domestic violence victims such as "After She Leaves", a model for supporting women abuse survivors and their children, threat assessment and police response to domestic violence calls, the impact of violence, abuse and neglect on children. There was also a keynote presentation from Mr. Brian Vallee entitled, "The War On Women".

### High Risk Offender Conference – Sudbury, ON

On April 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Coordinator attended the above conference hosted by Greater Sudbury Police Service in partnership with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. This conference had an overall focus of coordinated community commitment dedicated to enhancing victim safety and quality of life through specialized offender management strategies. The keynote address by Captain Robert J. Martin, retired LAPD, focused on "helping victims

manage their fears”, and on threat assessment models for assessing domestic violence situations that might escalate to homicide. A presentation was made in relation to the National Victim Registry System and the Ministry of Attorney Generals office on High Risk/Dangerous Offenders.

#### Domestic Violence – “A Continuing Danger”

On May 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Coordinator attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Domestic Violence Coordinators’ Conference held at Seneca College. Retired Nashville TN, Lieutenant Mark Wynn, spoke on Stalking and Counter Stalking / Police/ Perpetrators, Responding to Children and the Scene, Victim and Officer Safety and Threat Assessment. Also Dr. George McClane, Medical Director of the San Diego Family Justice Centre spoke on domestic violence investigations involving strangulation.

#### Community Fair & Education Forum

On June 17<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Coordinator attended the Davedi Club for an agency based community fair and education forum. This forum was an opportunity to showcase the services offered by the North Bay Police Service in relation to women’s abuse issues. It was a chance to network and become aware of the wide range of resources available in North Bay and the surrounding area. This event was hosted by the Nipissing Transition House, in partnership with the Crisis Centre, Ojibway Family Resource Centre, Sturgeon Falls Family Resource Centre and SupporLink. This was an extremely valuable event and it is the hope of the Coordinator that this type of event will continue in the future as our resources and the people involved are always changing.

#### “Lessons Learned” – 2006 Amish Schoolhouse Shooting Seminar

On September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009, the Coordinator attended the above seminar hosted by the Rama Police Service in Orillia. This seminar was presented by Lieutenant Krawczel and Corporal Magyar of the Pennsylvania State Police. They provided a detailed look at the events of the October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006 shooting at a one-room Amish Schoolhouse in south central Pennsylvania. This incident resulted in the deaths of five young girls and the serious injury of five others. This seminar outlined lessons learned during this horrific event. Topics included incident management, criminal investigation, media, community concerns, and crisis counselling.

## Domestic Violence High Risk Committees – Conference, Ontario Police College

On December 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Coordinator attended the above conference hosted by the Ministry of the Attorney General at the Ontario Police College. This conference was in response to the recommendations from three reports, the Osidacz Inquest Recommendations, the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Report and the Domestic Violence Advisory Council. All recommended the implementation of Domestic Violence High Risk Committees in all 54 Court Jurisdictions. Domestic Violence High Risk Committees typically include Police, Probation, Crown Attorneys and Victim Witness Assistance Program Managers as core members.

The Coordinator was able to obtain guidelines, minimum standards for criminal justice based DV High Risk Committees and samples of documents from committees already in operation in order to assist justice partners establish a committee within our court jurisdiction.

### 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. Assistance was provided in the completion of the necessary documents for these applications.

In April 2008, The Ministry of the Attorney General implemented the Early Victim Contact in Domestic Violence Cases by the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (VWAP). Under this initiative VWAP contacts domestic violence victims within one working day following notification of the offence and explain the Domestic Violence Court Program. It addresses victim's concerns about safety and involvement with the criminal justice system, provides referrals and resources, and provides accurate case related information. Where contact is made prior to Bail Court, VWAP will seek victim input on bail conditions and provide victim information to the Crown Attorney prior to a Bail Hearing. In 2009, the Coordinator continued to facilitate the necessary exchange of information with VWAP regarding this initiative.

In November of 2008, the North Bay Police Service entered into a trial project with Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service (VCARS). This initiative focused on providing a seamless response between police and victim services in relation to domestic violence calls. VCARS staff and volunteers responded 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 staff and volunteers were present and ready to offer assistance to the victim. This project was reviewed on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 and has been accepted as policy by the North Bay Police Service.

In 2009, Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service along with the North Bay Police Service were the co-applicants of a grant from the Ministry of Community and Correctional Services. As a result of this grant, the "Victim Safety Project" was initiated. This initiative is an eighteen month project to address concerns around victim safety assessment and planning as well as bail notification for all criminal offences investigated by the North Bay Police Service. Reports indicate that this service is running very effectively and has been received by victims as a positive addition to their interactions with the criminal justice system. In 2010 the project coordinator will be looking into the long term sustainability of this project.

On September 21<sup>st</sup> 2009, the Victim Assistance/Domestic Violence Coordinator was recognized for exemplary service to Victims of Crime at a meeting of the Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers held in Kingston, Ontario. The Coordinator was nominated by local VCARS Executive Director, Carolyn Couchie. The awards were presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Network of Victim Services Providers by Ministry of the Attorney General representative Diane Dupont, Manager, Ontario Victim Services Secretariat, East Region. Constable Melodee Prevost was nominated and won in the category of Field Practitioners who develop and implement innovative victim service programs and projects. The Ontario Network of Victim Services Providers represents thirty-three Victim Service agencies throughout the Province.

Janine Lafreniere, Executive Director of the Nipissing Transition House was also nominated and won in the category of Service Providers who deliver exceptional service to victims for her innovative project "End the Cycle of Abuse" as well as her recent involvement in the Calendar Girls project and the local Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee Education subcommittee.

### Training

In January 2009, the Coordinator provided an in-service training session to the employee's of the Community Counselling Centre in relation to the Victim Service / Domestic Violence Coordinator's mandate at the North Bay Police Service. This was a coordinated effort to provide an enhanced service to the victims of domestic abuse by both agencies. The Coordinator along with the SupportLink Coordinator conducted several information sessions with women at the Community Counselling Centre, through the Woman's Program.

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

On April 28<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, 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	2008	2009
VCARS	47	160
VWAP	392	420
Community Care Access Centre	3	3
Seniors Mental Health	4	2

Number of New Partnerships and Sustained Partnerships	2008	2009
Sustained	19	22
New	3	0

**E. Anticipated Issues for the Future**

N/A

**F. Performance Objectives for the Next Year**

1. To host a Domestic Violence Conference in February 2010 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 work with Justice Partners to establish a Domestic Violence High Risk Committee.
4. To review and report on, on-going initiatives with outside agencies and community partners.
5. To continue strong partnerships with community partners.

**G. Other**

N/A

**H. Appendices**

N/A