



Family Violence Project
of Waterloo Region

**Working Together to Make a
Difference**

Family Violence Project Waterloo Region: It's all about relationships

- Project launched in March 2006
- ***First*** Co-located ***Multi-Service, Multi-Sectoral*** Response to Family Violence in Canada
- Now Open: Brantford (virtual), Calgary, Edmonton, Durham
- Coming Soon: Scarborough, Peel

Single Location with Co-located Services

- Independent & collaborative
- Sole location or satellite location:
 - Flattened hierarchy between services
 - Own policies and procedures
 - Multiple access points
- **Common purpose/goal**

Clients May Not See Themselves as Victims of Abuse: Finding a Home That Fits for Client Needs

- Housed at a community service agency, Mosaic Counselling and Family Services:
 - If person doesn't think that they are a victim of domestic violence, it is unlikely that they would go to a centre for domestic violence victims.
 - Family service agency location allows flexibility for people to come with their own understanding of their concerns
 - Having staff with specific training at each agency/service helps increase opportunities to identify issues and create a sense of understanding and safety.

Lead and Others Will Follow/Contribute

- “Serendipity” will happen if your community is willing to step forward because there are lots of people, organizations who are willing to help if someone is willing to lead.

Client Driven Choices

- **Clients choose** which services to use
 - Some of services or all of services:
 - do not need to access the judicial system
 - duty to report seen as part of client support system/service
 - Linkages are made personally and/or to known service providers. Predictability of client support.
- Multiple access points: **there is no wrong way to access services. All services can create links.**
- Relationship component essential to providing help: visibility of other services increases likelihood of using services

Safety of client and children is always paramount

Stronger Together/Shared Responsibility

- Opportunities to share resources and staffing roles
- Working together does not mean “handing off” the responsibility.
- Building a circle of support for clients
 - Not “start and dump”
- Continuing to have the best people and organizations do what they do best.
- Mutual accountability for/to
- *It is the “how” that changes not the “what”*

14 Partners at the Family Violence Project

- **Medical/Emergency Response**
 - Waterloo Region Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centre (SA/DVTC)
- **Shelters /Community Outreach**
 - Women's Crisis Services (WCS), Outreach Workers
 - Community Action Programme for Children (CAPC)
 - Pathways to Education
- **Child Welfare**
 - Family and Children's Services, Domestic Violence Team (F&CS)
- **Counselling**
 - Mosaic Counselling and Family Services (MC&FS)
 - Credit Counselling Services (MC&FS)

...continued

14 Partners at the Family Violence Project

■ Justice Partners

- Waterloo Regional Police Service – Domestic Violence Investigations Branch (WRPS-DVIB)
- Crown Attorney's Office
- Waterloo Regional Police Service Victim Services Unit (WRPS-VSU)
- Victim/Witness Assistance Programme (VWAP)
- Victim Services of Waterloo Region

■ Justice/Community Elder Abuse Response

- Waterloo Regional Police Service/Community Care Access Centre Elder Abuse Response Team (EART)

Being Ready

- ***Relationships*** and ***commitment*** to taking the step are ***the most important aspects*** of being ready
- ***Policy follows action***
 - ***Design systems to meet needs of clients not reverse***

CROWN ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

- Early meetings with victims
- **Information/Education: Victims have face-to-face meetings with DV Co-ordinating Crown upon request**
- **Immediacy in addressing victim needs, safety concerns**
- Justice System more accessible to victim
- *Gives victims a voice and “the system” a face.*
- Increases offender accountability
- Leads to earlier resolutions.

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Crown: Victim Meeting (VWAP Present)

- **If victim wishes to clarify, change, recant, statement:**
 - Crown arranges for DVIU Officer meet with victim after the Crown meeting. Leads to immediate investigation of recantation. Leads to re-screening of charge and disclosure in accordance with Crown Policy.
 - “Wrap Around Care” and Victims having the opportunity to have a voice early is important.

This process happens quickly when co-located.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TEAM

- 4 Teams: *9 intake workers, 17 ongoing service workers, 2 clinicians*
- Focus is on providing mandated child protection interventions in cases of adult conflict with a **victim centered response** whenever possible.
- *Recognition that child protection services are best provided within the context of the community*
 - *Joint programming with community agencies for men, women and couples*

Differential Response: Impact on Clients

- F&CS is a partner in finding solutions for the family:
- *Receive customized responses designed for individual families* taking into consideration: **strengths of the family**, other services that family is receiving and how that protects the children and mother
- Diligent use of authority to protect mothers and children when other means seem inadequate:
 - *Minimizing use of child protection court orders to provide services as this can further victimize mothers*
- *Hold abuser accountable for behaviour:*
 - Meet with offender except when poses risk to victim or children to do so
 - Provide community programs for men such as individual counselling, Caring Dads, Partners for Healthy Relationships

Co-ordination with Family and Children's Services (CAS) and Crown

- ☑ F&CS consulted in appropriate cases on bail issues
 - ☑ i.e. offender cannot see children until meeting with F&CS to ensure appropriate assessment and actions
 - ☑ FVP Crown met with Judiciary to discuss improved co-ordination with Family Court and Criminal Court
 - ☑ F&CS now held accountable to have information ready to present in court
- All of the above “doable” in your community

Waterloo Region Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centre (SA/DVTC)

- Team of *nurses, social workers and physicians*
- *24/7 response at Emergency Departments* of Cambridge Memorial Hospital/St. Mary's General Hospital for victims of sexual or intimate partner violence

SA/DVTC Training Saves Lives

- SA/DVTC are the experts on strangulation injury awareness in your community.
 - Use them to train, retrain and train again to all community service providers.
 - Ensure that your dispatch communicators are included in the training.
- Referrals directly from Crown following victim meetings. Prior to co-location such referrals were unheard of from Crown's office.

Development of Waterloo Regional Police Services: Domestic Violence Investigations Branch

- **30 Member dedicated unit:**
 - Carry case from *start to finish*
 - DV Risk Assessment completed with victim, additional information sought
 - High quality/thorough Crown briefs
 - “Break the Silence” information pamphlet given to victim
 - 2 Victim Services staff (civilians), 2 **Elder Abuse Response Team** staff (1 civilian, 1 officer, 1 mentor)
- ***Do not replace 911 responders***

WOMEN'S CRISIS SERVICES

- ***Outreach Program:*** assists women with safety planning, legal advocacy, housing and ongoing community support
- ☑ **Women's Crisis Services and WRPS Safety Plan MOU**
 - ☑ Reaching women who would never have accessed shelter services
 - ☑ Crown referrals for safety planning made in person
- ☑ Increase in prevention
 - **Making connections at lower risk levels**
- ☑ Impact for Staff/Service Providers
 - *Conversations* initiated
 - Increased cross-sectoral understanding

Future shelter location known: Increased visibility increases recognition of a community issue not a private matter or private shame.

High Risk Case Review Team

High Risk Case Review Team

■ Purpose:

- ✓Victim safety
- ✓Victim support and resources
- ✓Offender management
- ✓Holding the Offender accountable
- ✓Reducing recidivism

through a co-ordinated and inclusive service response which eliminates gaps in communication.

Pieces of the Solution

- **Co-ordination/Co-location/Communication** not entire solution but is a ***critical and fundamental part of the solution*** to end family violence.
- **Success** should not be measured by whether a client stays or leaves, rather measured by the amount of support that they receive and that they feel safe/know where to reach out in future.

Need for High Risk Teams: How Would Your Community Respond?

- **“Honouring Christian Lee, No Private Matter: Protecting Children Living with Domestic Violence, September 2009”**

- On Sept. 4, 2007, six-year-old Christian Lee was supposed to have been walking into his Grade 1 classroom for the first time. Instead, in the early hours that morning, Christian and four members of his family died in a murder/suicide. Peter Lee murdered his son Christian, his wife Sunny Park, his parents-in-law from Korea and then killed himself.

- ☑ **Review this case and think about actual steps that would be taken in your community to prevent this tragedy: who, what, where, when, how etc.**

External Partners/Referrals

Ongoing partnerships: Partner Assault Response (PAR) programs, Probation/Parole, Multicultural Centres, Child Witness Services, etc., etc.

Direct Referrals & Use and Build Trusted Relationships

Responding to Community Needs

- **Groups for Parents and preschool children**
- **Employer/Employee Training to Target Domestic Violence**

Ongoing Commitment to Public Education and Mapping of Education

- “...the greatest need continues to be educating all members of the community about the warning signs of domestic violence and the appropriate action necessary to prevent it.” (DVDRC 2005)
- Mapping DV public education being done in your community to recognize areas getting/needing focus.
- www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca

Being Proactive in the Community

- ✓ Hosted *“Let’s Talk About Healthy Relationships in the High School Years ”*
 - Resource: *“Love and Respect”*: Teens Helping Teens Develop Safe and Healthy Relationships in New Mexico, 2009
- ✓ WRPS Plan(s) for a repeat domestic dispute resolution strategy:
 - Collaborative intervention by DV investigator and Victim Services Unit
 - Expansion of above strategy to include suicide attempts related to DV issues

Key component: early intervention prevents escalation to violence

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of Waterloo Region

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YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The Family Violence Project of Waterloo Region is a collaborative of agencies that provides wrap-around, seamless services to victims of domestic violence - all from a single location.

It takes enormous courage on the part of a victim to just come through one door and ask for help let alone to navigate a myriad of services scattered throughout the community. By entering one door at 400 Queen Street South in Kitchener, victims connect with a person they can trust who will guide them through a number of services all in a caring and supportive environment. Services such as police trained to deal with family violence, personal counselling for adults and children, assistance with developing safety plans, shelters, crisis/medical support for sexual assault, financial counselling, children's services, support groups, outreach services to the community, legal services, specialized elder abuse services, rural outreach services and specialized programs - all under one roof.



Our Services Include

[Victims' Services](#)

[Police Domestic Violence Services](#)

[Counselling for Adults & Children](#)

[Assistance with Safety Plans](#)

[Medical/Crisis Support for Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence](#)

[Children's Services](#)

[Outreach Services to the Community](#)

[Coming Events](#)



Funded by the Government of Ontario, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario Victim Services Secretariat Community Grants Program.

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Partnerships in Learning: Builds Mutual Respect & Understanding

☑ **Joint Training/Education opportunities** include FVP and community based services:

- Training for WRPS staff
- **DV Investigator Training Course (2 weeks, certificate course)**
- Violence Against Women/Family and Children's Services Training
- Impact of Witnessing Violence on Children
- **Strangulation Injuries Awareness Training**
- Immigration Status Workshop
- Ontario Police College Domestic Violence Co-ordinators Conference
- Corrections Canada Victim Services Program
- Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges through Understanding: Working with Members of the Muslim Community
- AIDS/HIV: Health and Culture
- Money Matters
- Mental Health Courts

The less that we know about each other the easier it is to misunderstand each other.

Successes Realized: Our Experience

- Increased support for clients
- Increased trust in the system: clients self referring and recommending service(s) to others
 - Earlier identification of concerns by clients and service providers
 - Clients reaching out for support at a lower level of violence
- DVIU obtaining Family Court Order on CLRA and FLA matters for Criminal package regardless of FLA breach
- ☑ Improved wording of terms in conjunction with Crown
- Increased understanding of and trust between services

Success Realized: Client Feedback

“This kind of organization is really the foundation of a family centred community

.... a place to go during a crisis... a place to heal after assault/abuse... a place to teach my children that abuse is not OK and that a family may have more or less members in number but never abuse.”

...a client

Our Journey Has Just Begun

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