

# **MANITOBA JUSTICE VICTIM SERVICES**

**An Overview of Victim Services and  
the Domestic Violence Death Review  
Pilot Committee**

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## MANITOBA JUSTICE, VICTIM SERVICES HELPS VICTIMS OF:

- The most serious crimes as outlined in *The Victims' Bill of Rights*
- Victims of domestic violence
- Child victims/witnesses
  - Adult Survivors of child sexual abuse

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## PROVIDES SERVICES PROVINCE-WIDE

- Winnipeg
  - services are delivered by workers divided into specialty units
- Rural Manitoba
  - services are delivered by workers who serve all client types

# VICTIM SERVICES



# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## VICTIM SERVICES PROGRAMS

- Domestic Violence Support Service
- Domestic Violence Intervention Unit (Winnipeg)
- Protection Order Designates Program
  - Cellphone Emergency Limited Link-up (CELL)
- Victim Rights Support Service
- Child Victim Support Service
- Compensation for Victims of Crime Program
- Victim Impact Statements (currently under review)
- Victim Witness Assistance Program (Winnipeg)

# VICTIM SERVICES

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICE

**Domestic Violence Support Service helps victims of domestic violence when criminal charges have been laid or may be laid.**

- Provide information about the criminal charges and the court process
- Explain the roles of those involved in the criminal justice system
- Review safety planning
- Explain how to get protective relief orders
- Offer on-going emotional support and short-term counselling
- Prepare victims for court and accompanies when possible
- Advise Crown attorneys of victim's concerns, safety issues
- Provides referrals to community resources
- 4,615 files opened in 2008/09

# VICTIM SERVICES

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION UNIT

- Established in Winnipeg in 2006
- Offers support to families who receive police services for domestic violence incidents that occur in Winnipeg, but that do not result in charges or arrests
- Specially trained workers assist individuals and their families to increase their safety by providing meaningful and appropriate information, support, advocacy and referral.
- Based on partnership with WPS (information sharing and partnering with home visits in high risk situations)
- In 2008/2009, DVIU responded to 10,989 matters.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- Services include:
  - Creating a safe, supportive environment to talk about the situation
  - Connecting families/individuals to appropriate community resources through referral, advocacy and coordination of community resources
  - Providing short-term emotional support and referral to counselling
  - Create a protection plan to improve safety
  - Offering information about, and help with orders of protective relief
  - Providing service to both partners where appropriate and safe to do so

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## PROTECTION ORDER DESIGNATES SERVICES (PODS)

- Information and training to community service providers under *The Domestic Violence and Stalking Act*
- Formal training of Protection Order Designates (PODS) who can help Protection Order applicants file court applications
- To date 32 agencies have participated in the training.
- Over 80 PODS located in 16 communities across the province

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## CELLPHONE EMERGENCY LIMITED LINK-UP PROGRAM

- Cooperative effort between MTS, Nokia, UT Starcom, 28 social service agencies, police services and Manitoba Justice
- Loans free cell phones to victims in high risk, domestic violence relationships or to victims of stalking
- Phones are pre-programmed to dial emergency services
- Available in several Manitoba communities
- 68 phones throughout the province
- 37 phones loaned out in 2008/09

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## VICTIM RIGHTS SUPPORT SERVICE

- *The VBR* came into effect in 2001
- Recognizes and protects the rights of victims of the most serious crimes
- Assists victims who qualify for service by helping them register for their rights under the *VBR*
- Explaining when and how they may exercise their rights
- Providing information about the prosecution and results of the case against the accused
- Providing court support and information when possible
- 501 new files in 2008/09

# VICTIM SERVICES

## CHILD VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES

Helps victims and witnesses of abuse (up to 18 years of age), adult survivors of sexual abuse and other vulnerable victims who are involved in the criminal court process by:

- Explaining the criminal court process and procedures
- Preparing them for court (including a visit to courtroom)
- Identifying special needs and potential for aids to help with testimony
- Scheduling meetings with Crown attorneys to discuss any special issues
- Arranging short-term counselling, referring them to therapists or treatment programs, providing emotional support
- 1241 new files opened in 2008/09

# VICTIM SERVICES

## COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAM

- Provides compensation to victims who suffer personal injury, hardships or expenses as a result of certain crimes
- Available to specific relatives and dependants of victims of homicide in Manitoba
- Formal report must be made to police
- Covers reasonable expenses not already covered by another source such as:
  - Medical expenses (i.e. prescription drug costs, ambulance bills)
  - Replacement of damaged clothing or items seized by police as evidence
- 992 new applications in 2008/09

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAM

- Dental treatment, replacement or repair of dentures
- Replacement or repair of prescription eyeglasses
- Payment for grief therapy or other counselling services
- Compensation for lost wages
- Support payments for dependants
- Payment for rehabilitation or retraining
- Compensation for permanent disability
- Payment of funeral expenses

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## VICTIM / WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- Victim/Witness Assistance provides support services to victims and witnesses of crime who are subpoenaed to appear in either Provincial Court or Court of Queen's Bench. Victims/witnesses receive a variety of services, including:
  - assistance with filling out victim impact statements
  - court orientations and accompaniments
  - court cancellation notifications
  - reimbursement of expense claims

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATH REVIEW PILOT COMMITTEE (DVDRPC)**

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- The DVDRPC was struck in May 2008 as a result of recommendations made by Dr. Jane Ursel after the DV homicide of Ms Shannon Scromeda.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- Dr. Ursel indicated Manitoba could benefit from a committee similar to the one operating in Ontario.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- Manitoba Justice, Victim Services was directed to take the lead and explore the possibility of establishing a similar committee.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- The Manitoba DVDRPC's aim is to conduct an initial review of a domestic violence homicide to see what can be learned and whether or not future tragedies could be prevented by creating a committee that would regularly review these matters

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- In October 2008, DVDRPC members attended the 'Think Tank' in London on the issue of homicide review committees
- The think tank allowed for the sharing of best practice and limitations of the Ontario committee with an aim to assist jurisdictions who are in the midst of creating and establishing their own committees.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- In conjunction with Family Violence Prevention Month, 2008, Minister Mackintosh announced that the government was looking at the possibility of creating a DVDRC.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- The DVDRPC includes representation from:
  - Victim Services
  - Prosecutions
  - Family Violence Prevention Program
  - Status of Women
  - The Women's Advisory Council, Probation Services
  - Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's office
  - The Winnipeg Police Service, and
  - Dr. Jane Ursel of RESOLVE.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

To date, the DVDRPC has focused on the following:

- History and background
- Identification of additional stakeholders
- Terms of reference
- Determining the scope and set-up of the reviews
- Identifying DV homicide case review options
- *FIPPA, PHIA and Privacy Act* concerns

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- The DVDRPC last met in October, 2008. At that time, all members agreed that the group could not proceed with an initial review until the privacy issues were further considered.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- Victim Services and Prosecutions met with Civil Legal Services in October 2008 to provide background information and request an opinion on whether or not the legal authority existed to establish a DVDRPC in Manitoba.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- On March 10, 2009, CLS provided their final advice on the establishment of a DVDRPC.
- CLS indicated the legal authority exists to establish a committee
- However, CLS strongly recommended a PIA be completed prior to moving ahead with an initial review or any further work.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- PIA is necessary because in the event of a privacy related complaint, the Department can demonstrate that all privacy risks were mitigated.

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- What have we learned so far?

# VICTIM SERVICES

---

- Very complex issue
- Many different models exist across North America
- Strengths and weaknesses in all models
- Difficult to get started without legislation in place to support the committee's existence
- Additional human resources will be required
- Additional financial resources will be required