

SUMMARY OF THE TRI-COUNTY FORUMS
ON BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE MODEL OF PRACTICE TO ADDRESS
SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SERVICES



On September 23, 24 and 25, 2013, eighty three stakeholders participated in community forums in Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth to begin the process of developing a **Collaborative Model of Practice to address Sexual Violence in the Tri- Counties.** The following organizations/groups were represented:

- ✚ RCMP, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Health, Schools Plus, Legal Aid, Restorative Justice, Probation Services, Victim Services, Department of Community Services, Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Senior Safety Office, Women’s Institute of Sable River, Women’s Institute Weymouth, Réseau Santé, Women’s Place Resource Centre, Acadia First Nation, West Nova Inclusive Employment Society, Tri-County Pregnancy Care Centre , Our House Youth Wellness Centre, King St. Family Resource Centre, Nurse Practitioners, Ministerial Association, School Principals and Guidance Counselors, Tri-County Regional School Board, École Secondaire de Clare, Digby Area Learning Association, NSCC, Tri County Women’s Centre, SHYFT, Juniper House, Municipal Government Representatives, Engaging Men and Boys Project, Human Rights, Alternatives, and community members.

Based on the responses, this summary highlights our current assets and existing gaps so we can focus on action steps in order to improve our tri county **Sexual Violence Prevention and Intervention Response.**

This will help inform our Collaborative Model of Practice, the structure we are creating to address sexual violence prevention and intervention across the tri-counties in a coordinated, efficient, and effective manner.

Below are the highlights from the five pillars 1) Prevention, 2) Intervention, 3) Stakeholder Training, 4) Youth Engagement and 5) Communication that comprise our Collaborative Model of Practice.

Prevention

A highlight of Current Strengths include:

- Healthy youth relationship and leadership programs
- Restorative Practices
- Counselling, advocacy and support by agencies and organizations
- Education on sexual violence and bullying and cyber bullying
- Early response services from community and government agencies
- Sexual Prevention Tool Kit
- Healthy Sexuality Resource Book
- Mental Health Programs
- SchoolsPlus

Areas for action include:

- Education/awareness for all on bullying, sexual violence, social media, role of alcohol and available resources
- Programs for men and boys
- Integration of issues into the curriculum and offered in the earlier grades
- Confident Health Teachers who are comfortable with the subject
- Bystander “Green Dot” Program to provide the necessary prevention skills and strategies
- Actively advocate for proactive measures by government, rather than responding to issues
- “Every Door is the Right Door” – a multi-entry point of access across the service provider continuum
- Funding for Youth Health Centres to ensure adequate staffing of trained personnel

Intervention

A highlight of Current Strengths include:

- Counselling, advocacy and support by agencies and organizations
- Referrals to appropriate agencies/services
- School Code of Conduct and Zero tolerance policies
- Information/support for school staff on racism, homophobia, heterosexism, etc.

Areas for action include:

- Parental support and involvement
- Trauma-informed response training in schools, community, and for service providers
- Creating safe space for discussion; community dialogues, men and boys groups, families
- Networking (both local and provincial) for service providers to share training and resources, referral information
- Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program
- Public awareness on services and resources available
- Policy/Protocols that are conducive to Best Practice approaches
- Therapeutic and Support Groups for Survivors

Stakeholder Training

A highlight of professional training includes:

- Best practices in partnerships and information/resource sharing through inter-agency networks and advisory committees
- ISAY Program – Initiative for Sexually Aggressive Youth
- Collaborative interviewing
- Training on the Sexual Violence Prevention Tool Kit
- Anger management
- Restorative Practices addressing the harm done and taking responsibility for one's actions
- I.C.E – Provincial Integrated Child Exploitation Unit

Areas to focus on include:

- Youth Truth Matters - youth leadership training
- Training on supporting parents/guardians
- First Responder training to provide the best support to victims and ensure the validity of the evidence for court purposes
- Cultural competency
- Non-violent crisis intervention
- Best practices to interventions on past and current sexual assault (trauma-informed, respectful, confidential)
- Bystander training - Green Dot prevention program
- Cyber Bullying – new legislation
- Mental Health Awareness

Youth Engagement

A highlight of Current Strengths include:

- Sexual Violence Prevention Tool Kit
- Youth Truth Matters project
- École secondaire de Clare Intimidation group
- SHYFT Youth Services
- Restorative Practices
- Schools Plus student advisory committee
- “Good Fellas” School Club
- Peer Leaders and Mentors
- “Our House” Youth Wellness Centre Programs
- Early intervention programs through the Family Resource Centre

Areas to focus on include:

- Involve youth as stakeholders
 - empower youth by creating a comfortable space
 - focus on underrepresented communities
 - youth focus groups
- Peer support training
- Youth-created and promoted resources
- Youth Bystander Training

Communication

Stakeholders indicated that they would like to keep in touch via email, newsletters, brochures, and possibly through a collaborative website, while sharing information on our own websites. It was stressed that in-person meetings to touch base are most important.

Universal topics in the discussions at our stakeholder meetings were:

- ensure our intervention services are appropriate and responsive to the needs of the victim
- strengthen the role of healthy relationship education
- involve youth in all aspects of the work
- more public awareness of the issues, as well as available resources
- work with boys and men
- strengthen the role of parents/ guardians - both support and education
- importance of cultural competency
- strengthening and encouraging use of restorative practices

As we move towards action steps we are aware of some key areas that have stood out:

- First Response - needs to be community based victim centered
 - ∇ SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) Program combined with a SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) with appropriate protocols

- Therapeutic and Support Services & Programming - needs to be both clinical and community based ensuring:
 - ∇ Services are available and accessible
 - ∇ Meets the needs across all our diversities – age, gender, orientation, cultural

- Prevention
 - ∇ Bystander intervention training
 - ∇ Parent/guardian training and support
 - ∇ Youth-led peer support

There is a strong will and desire from all stakeholders to maximize our resources by working together to ensure;

- 1) Our sexual violence Intervention Response to recent and past sexual assault is reducing and preventing further harm.
- 2) Our sexual violence Prevention Programing is supported and meeting the needs.