

# Recommendations from the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

2019

Office of the Chief Coroner  
December 2020

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Domestic Violence Death Review Committee**

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In December 2009, the Department of Public Safety, Chief Coroner's Office, established the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to assist the Office of the Chief Coroner in the review of deaths of persons that occur as a result of domestic violence, and to make recommendations to help prevent such deaths in similar circumstances. The Chair of the Committee is the Deputy Chief Coroner with members from law enforcement, Public Prosecutions, health, academia, research, service provision, interested citizens and government.

A domestic violence death is defined as a homicide or suicide that results from violence between intimate partners or ex-partners and may include the death of a child or other familial members.

The committee provides a confidential multi-disciplinary review of domestic violence deaths. It creates and maintains a comprehensive database about the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence fatalities and their circumstances. It helps identify systemic issues, problems, gaps, or shortcomings in each case and may make appropriate recommendations concerning prevention. It helps identify trends, risk factors, and patterns from the cases reviewed to make recommendations for effective intervention and prevention strategies.

For the period 2010 – 2019, the Committee has reviewed and submitted reports on 18 cases to the Chief Coroner. In turn the Chief Coroner has forwarded the reports to government departments and agencies involved in the cases for response. Departments and agencies involved have responded to the Chief Coroner on the actions they intend to take to implement the recommendations. The recommendations and responses for the 18 cases reviewed to date are available on the Public Safety [website](#). The recommendations and departmental responses to the latest cases are reported on the following pages.

Improving our understanding of why perpetrators of abuse kill their intimate partners and why victims of abuse are vulnerable and using this information to take action to prevent future deaths is essential to reveal systemic gaps and to reduce and eliminate domestic violence in New Brunswick. The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee has an opportunity to educate government and community agencies in New Brunswick with the goal of preventing future domestic homicides and assaults.

The committee continues to meet and review cases.

## **Recommendations and Responses**

### **Recommendation #1**

The Office of the Chief Coroner continue his efforts to facilitate the sharing of information between Provincial/Territorial jurisdictions.

#### **Response – Office of the Chief Coroner**

Significant effort is underway to improve sharing of information specifically in regard to domestic violence deaths on a couple of initiatives including:

- The Office of the Chief Coroner is a representative of the Province on the Atlantic Domestic Homicide Review Network. This network was created by the Council of Atlantic Premiers in January 2020, with its principle aim being the prevention of domestic homicide.
- Recommendations have been made regarding amendments of the Coroners Act that are currently under review. These proposed amendments if approved would strengthen the statutory authority of the Chief Coroner to support the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee allowing for improved gathering and sharing of information.

### **Recommendation #2**

The Department of Health and Regional Health Authorities

- Review the Woman Victims of Abuse Protocols, chapter 8, to ensure they are applied and relevant assessments completed within emergency hospital departments including at the first point of contact, when arriving at Emergency (i.e. triage assessment) as per 8.1.2.;
- Amend the assessment triage form to add universal screening specific to intimate partner violence and documented;
- Ensure continued staff training as per 8.2.9 for health care staff.

#### **Response – Health**

Through the pandemic, work has been underway in collaboration with the departments of Social Development, Public Safety and the Women Equality Branch, to review the assessment questions, to come to a common agreement on which questions should be asked within the health care setting and to bring attention to the Women's Victim of Abuse Protocols.

### **Recommendation # 3**

Departments of Health, Justice, Public Safety, Women's Equality Branch recognize the vulnerability, isolation, and risk associated with the intersectionality of illicit drug use, criminal behavior and intimate partner violence;

- Update woman victims of abuse protocols, and
- Provide training for formal and informal service providers to effectively identify and respond to these situations.

#### **Response – Health**

A memorandum was shared with Addictions and Mental Health Services, the New Brunswick Medical Society, and health care providers within the regional health authorities reminding these professionals that restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, may place added stress on individuals and families. It was highlighted that this may be especially relevant for families where domestic/intimate partner violence has existed or is present. All health care providers were reminded of the opportunity to detect domestic/intimate partner violence by asking a few simple questions. All available resources were identified, including the Women Victims of Abuse protocols.

#### **Response – Justice**

Woman Abuse Protocols: Justice and Office of the Attorney General (JAG) participated in an interdepartmental working group led by the Women's Equality Branch (WEB) to update the woman victims of abuse protocols in 2013-2014. The department will commit to providing staff to participate in any further updating of the protocols.

Training: Under the responsibility of JAG, the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Act, lists factors which must be considered by a Hearing Officer when determining whether an emergency intervention order (EIO) should be made. The factors represent indicators of risk and predictors of lethality and include criminal behaviours such as violence, threats of violence and abduction, violence towards other people or animals, and substance abuse. Identification of these risk factors are included in the training provided to designated service providers who are trained to assist victims to apply for an EIO. The service providers who are trained include representation from Police, RCMP, Victim Services Coordinators at DPS, Domestic Violence sector workers and social workers with the DSD.

The risk factors in the legislation are also listed in a NB publication developed to inform people about EIOs. The booklet entitled, Emergency Intervention Orders, was distributed widely and is available online.

JAG and WEB collaborated in 2019-2020 to deliver protection order information sessions to Intimate Partner Violence service providers in First Nation Communities. The content of these sessions included information about the risk factors referred to above.

Although unrelated to training, the application form for an Emergency Intervention Order pursuant to the IPVI Act includes questions about the presence of these risk factors for the victim to identify and respond to.

### **Response – Public Safety**

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) acknowledges the co-occurrence of illicit drug use, criminal behavior, and intimate partner violence, as well as how these factors contribute to increased risk of serious harm and death. An understanding of how these factors also contribute to heightened vulnerability and isolation for the parties involved needs to be included in protocols and communicated in training, to ensure service providers can effectively identify and respond in these situations. DPS will support the Women's Equality Branch's efforts to update the Woman Victims of Abuse Protocols to reflect emerging research, knowledge and practice. The latest edition of the Protocols (2014), replacing the 2004 edition, addresses violence against Aboriginal women, sexual violence in intimate relationships, and working with women from diverse groups. The protocols promote a collective and coordinated response to violence against women that is woman-centred.

DPS will also ensure that training on domestic/intimate partner violence (D/IPV) by department staff to both formal and informal service providers covers the additional challenges presented by this intersection and offers insights into how to identify and respond effectively. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has only intensified the vulnerability and isolation of people living with addictions and D/IPV.

Victim Services Coordinators receive training in the use of the Danger Assessment tool, and interdisciplinary Coordinated Community Response (CCR) teams to high risk and high danger D/IPV receive necessary training. Recently, Crime Prevention Branch staff delivered D/IPV training virtually to a group of Community Services members and community partners. Utilizing a diversity lens, this training also included components on risk management and Emergency Intervention Orders. Co-presenters included Women's Equality Branch.

DPS will continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with the Women's Equality Branch and other departments on training and other activities that educate various partners on the vulnerability, isolation, and risk associated with the intersectionality of illicit drug use, criminal behavior, and intimate partner violence including how to effectively identify and respond to these situations.

### **Response – Women's Equality Branch**

The WEB (WEB) has been in contact with the Department of Health, Mental Health & Addictions, to explore ways to provide training for primary health care providers and mental health and addictions practitioners.

WEB collaborated with the Department of Health and the Department of Public Safety during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop a Memo to CEOs from the RHAs as well as to the New Brunswick Medical Society providing general information about detecting abuse. It was particularly targeted towards Addictions and Mental Health staff who provide screening, assessment and/or services to victims and perpetrators of abuse. It included sample questions to ask, a copy of Woman Victims of Abuse Protocols section outline tools for health professionals to screen for potential abuse during intervention, and a list of resources to refer on to for additional domestic violence supports.

WEB will work with Departments of Health, Justice and Attorney General and Public Safety to ensure orientation to the Woman Victims of Abuse Protocols includes a focus on:

- Victim vulnerabilities of isolation;
- Substance use and criminal behavior that impact the level of risk of serious harm or lethality due to intimate partner violence;
- And the increased level of risk of a perpetrator of intimate partner violence seriously harming or killing their partner.

These risk factors will also be incorporated into introductory intimate partner violence training and risk assessment training.

#### **Recommendation #4**

As recommended by victim's parents, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development enhance prevention and education on illicit use of drugs and criminal behaviors, increasing risk of harm or death.

#### **Response – Education and Early Childhood Development**

The prevention of and education on illicit use of drugs and criminal behaviours, increasing risk of harm or death, currently exists in the curricula for Health and Personal Development and Career Planning (PDCP). Your letter is timely as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) is in the process of re-writing the middle school health curriculum. Additionally, in the PDCP curriculum students learn about healthy relationships.

#### **Recommendation #5**

The Department of Tourism with the Department of Public Safety and the Women's Equality Branch develop an information sheet on intimate partner violence with local resources available to be posted in all motels, hotels, and restaurants.

#### **Response – Tourism**

The department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage is prepared to engage with our partners the New Brunswick Hotel Association and the Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick to determine the best way to present and disseminate the information. We will rely on the expertise of the Department of Public Safety and Women's Equality Branch for the technical content of the information sheet.

#### **Response – Public Safety**

DPS recognizes that motels, hotels and restaurants are an underutilized avenue for disseminating D/IPV information and resources. As a result of this recommendation, and as part of New Brunswick's 5-year Plan on Guns and Gangs, efforts are underway to partner with the Women's Equality Branch and Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick to begin a campaign regarding the intersection of gun violence and D/IPV. This campaign seeks to target the tourism industry, as well as other partners and the general public. DPS commits to partnering with the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture to disseminate the finished campaign.

More specifically, the campaign aims to inform and engage New Brunswickers about gun violence within the context of D/IPV, while encouraging friends, neighbors, coworkers and family members to speak up and support those who might be experiencing violence. The campaign will provide contact information to local resources and will be shared through Love Shouldn't Hurt's social media accounts.

#### **Response – Women's Equality Branch**

WEB is committed to promoting local resources available for victims of domestic violence across the province and has worked with the Department of Public Safety to promote these services regularly. WEB is currently supporting the Department of Public Safety to support an initiative on educational resources and the risk factors related to guns and domestic violence, targeting the hospitality industry in particular.

## Recommendation #6

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour in collaboration with WorkSafe NB ensure employers and employees in New Brunswick receive training on domestic/intimate partner violence and information on how to assist victims and abusers access services and supports.

### Response – Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour

In 2016, the Department responded to the Committee's recommendations with information on Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Family Violence: Workplace Toolkit, the revised Woman Victims of Abuse Protocol, and the new Government of New Brunswick Employee Health and Safety Unit, among other things. In 2018, the Department provided information about new provincial workplace initiatives addressing domestic, intimate partner or sexual violence, specifically:

- Amendments to the Employment Standards Act providing leave protection for persons subject to domestic violence, intimate partner or sexual violence, which came into force on March 16, 2018, and the Domestic Violence, Intimate Partner Violence or Sexual Violence Leave Regulation, in force on August 22, 2018; and
- Amendments to the General Regulation under Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) addressing violence and harassment, including the spillover of domestic violence, intimate violence and sexual violence, as workplace health and safety hazards, which came into force on April 1, 2019.

The Department worked closely with WorkSafe NB on the development of the new OHSA regulatory requirements. Now that they are in force, WorkSafe NB has statutory responsibility for administering the regulation, including training for employers and employees. It is my understanding that WorkSafe NB will provide information about this in its own response to the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee's 2019 recommendations. The Department and WorkSafe NB continue to collaborate as appropriate.

Over the past year, the Department has actively sought out opportunities to engage in initiatives that contribute to enhancing awareness of issues related to gender violence in New Brunswick's workplaces:

- In the Fall of 2019, the Department joined the Muriel McQueen Ferguson Centre's Workplace Violence and Abuse Research Team, providing input on the updating of the Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Workplace Toolkit. The Department consulted with WorkSafe NB in developing its input. (see <http://www.toolkitnb.ca/>)
- The Department also sits on the Implementation Committee responsible for the provincial framework Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence in New Brunswick. This Committee advises on initiatives for prevention and awareness, professional development and training, intervention, and policy, research and evaluation.

### Response – WorkSafe NB

WorkSafe NB believes that the first part of this recommendation 'ensure employers and employees in New Brunswick receive training on domestic/intimate partner violence' was addressed through regulatory amendments implemented in 2019. As of April 1, 2019, employers in New Brunswick are required to assess the risk of violence in their workplaces. Section 374.1(3)(b)(ii) requires employers to consider whether domestic/intimate partner violence exposes a workplace to violence. All employers in the province are now required to complete this assessment.

374.1(3) When conducting the assessment referred to in subsection (1), the employer shall consider the following information:

- (b) the risk that may arise out of or in connection with
- (ii) sexual violence, intimate partner violence or domestic violence occurring at the place of employment;

Depending on the results of the assessment, employers are required to establish a Code of Practice – Violence to set out the actions and measures the employer will take to mitigate the risk of that violence in the workplace. Among several requirements, the employer must identify the training needed for employees and supervisors, and to implement a training plan accordingly. If the workplace risk assessment identifies a risk of domestic/intimate partner violence the employer is required to include that in the Code of Practice – Violence. Of note, there are several mandatory industries and

professions where the Code of Practice – Violence is mandatory as they are considered at a higher risk of violence than most other workplaces.

374.3(2) A code of practice referred to in subsection (1) shall set out the actions and measures the employer shall take to mitigate the risk of violence, including  
(g) the identification of training needs.

374.7(1) An employer shall implement a training program in respect of the codes of practice established under sections 374.2 and 374.4 for each employee and for each supervisor who is responsible for an employee.

To assist employers with the duties described above, WorkSafe NB has workplace violence and harassment material:

- On its website (<https://www.worksafenb.ca/safety-topics/workplace-violence-and-harassment/>);
- On its OHS Guide (topic on violence: <https://ohsguide.worksafenb.ca/topic/violence.html>); and,
- Included in online joint health and safety training curriculum (E-course: New Brunswick Health and Safety Legislation).

Regarding the second part of the recommendation (“... information on how to assist victims and abusers access services and supports”), WorkSafe NB commits to adding a resource maintained by GNB’s Women’s Equality Branch to its website and OHS Guide topic. The document entitled “Support Services for Victims of Abuse” provides resources and contact information for crisis lines, shelters, domestic violence outreach services and other emergency information: (<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/WEB-EDF/Violence/PDF/en/E-Support%20Services%20for%20Victims%20of%20Abuse%20March2020.pdf>).

### **Response – Women’s Equality Branch**

The WEB (WEB) currently chairs the New Brunswick Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence (DIPV) in the Workplace Committee, a Committee of various government, community and business stakeholders across New Brunswick with the mandate to provide educational and promotional resources and training to employers on how to respond to domestic/intimate partner violence. In 2019, the Committee invited representatives of PETL and WorkSafe NB to join and has been seeking their input and expertise to develop materials and training for employers. It’s Your Business: A Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence Workplace Toolkit, was finalized and launched by representatives of the WEB in collaboration with the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the Canadian Domestic Violence Conference in March 2020. Training has been delivered to employers throughout 2019 and continues to be developed and adapted to various sectors, with continued input from PETL and WorkSafe NB on appropriate legislative measures, new leaves available under the Employment Standards Act related to domestic violence, and so on. The WEB will continue to work with PETL and WorkSafe NB to raise awareness and deliver training to employers where possible through the New Brunswick DIPV in the Workplace Committee, searching for new ways to make training available online during the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee will continue to actively promote the toolkit and the training through social media and will provide training upon request.

Over the past number of years, WEB has been involved in the Respectful Workplace Initiative of the Workplace Violence and Abuse Research Team. During their yearly conferences, there have been information sessions on sexual harassment, DIPV and the workplace and during the 2020 free webinar series, DIPV in the Workplace: It’s Your Business is one of the sessions scheduled. WEB will maintain their membership on the Workplace Violence and Abuse Research Team to continue this work.

### **Recommendation #7**

WorkSafe NB direct Joint Health and Safety Committees to include response to domestic/intimate partner violence as a mandatory standing agenda item, recognizing it as a workplace health and safety priority.

### **Response – WorkSafe NB**

The Occupational Health and Safety Act does not provide WorkSafe NB with the authority to require Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs) to include standing items in their meeting agendas. The content of committee agendas is determined by the committee itself and is often included in the Terms of Reference developed for the workplace.

It is our experience that most committees receive and review incident information from their workplace on a regular basis – as with any other incident, incidents stemming from D/IPV would be reviewed by the committee at that time.

It is important to note that information related to D/IPV incidents the employer provides to the Joint Health and Safety Committee is bound by the requirements in General Regulation 91-191 to maintain confidentiality and privacy with respect to violent incidents. Employers must not collect or disclose any personal information unless necessary to investigate the incident, implement corrective measures or if required by law. As such, information provided to committees should be an aggregate level and not disclose personal information to the committee members.

WorkSafe NB does however, have the authority to approve curriculum and training providers for JHSC committee members, as well as to provide advice and suggested templates for committees to consider including in their meeting agendas. In support of the requirement for risk assessments and Codes of Practice – Violence to include the potential for domestic/intimate partner violence, WorkSafe NB will review our approved curriculums and other resources for Joint Health and Safety Committees to identify opportunities to include review of D/IPV incidents.

### **Recommendation #8**

The Department of Public Safety and the Department of Justice and Office of the Attorney General with support from the Women's Equality Branch increase the promotion and dissemination of the Love Shouldn't Hurt Campaign and the Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick "Safer Families...Safer Communities" to the public, private and voluntary sectors and to the public at large. Strategies should also employ a wide variety of communication methods and tools and multiple media platforms to reach across generations and reflect the diversity of New Brunswick communities.

### **Response – Public Safety**

DPS acknowledges that there is more work to be done to promote the Love Shouldn't Hurt campaign. The campaign uses a layered, cohesive approach that builds on current initiatives of over 55 partner organizations. It involves social media (Facebook and Twitter), community Champions, and an easy-to-access website with directories of services, tools, information and services available to victims, abusers and bystanders. As of March 31, 2020, the Love Shouldn't Hurt campaign has reached over 70,000 New Brunswickers, an increase of 20,000 engagements when compared to the year prior.

Federal funding has been secured for 2020-2021, and the Love Shouldn't Hurt Advisory Committee has hired a part-time coordinator who will oversee the coordination of the campaign and its Champions with oversight from the advisory committee and the Crime Prevention Branch. This part-time coordinator will work 15-20 hours per week and will grow social media following and engagement on various social media platforms, coordinate varying public and virtual engagement initiatives to increase the visibility of the campaign, identify and build relationships within the community, as well as research and identify opportunities for on-going, sustainable funding for the campaign with the objective to transition the Love Shouldn't Hurt campaign to an external agency.

Identifying on-going sustainable funding continues to be a barrier to increasing the visibility of the Love Shouldn't Hurt campaign, as well as transitioning it to an external agency.

### **Response – Justice and Attorney General**

The department will request courts in the regions to add printed material for these campaigns to their display shelves/cabinets for the public to access, where such cabinets are installed.

### **Response – Women's Equality Branch**

The WEB continues to sit on the Love Shouldn't Hurt Advisory Committee and is committed to continuing its collaboration with the Department of Public Safety to support an increased promotion and dissemination of the educational campaign to reach the wider public, as well as the employment sector (public, private and voluntary) through its work on the New Brunswick DIPV in the Workplace Committee. This Committee has posted links to various resources of the Love Shouldn't Hurt Campaign on its newly launched online toolkit for employers and refers to the Love Shouldn't Hurt Campaign and



“Safer Families...Safer Communities” throughout its training offered to employers, as additional resources for employers to find out more information on bystander actions and awareness of DIPV issues.

WEB continues to explore ways to communicate messages of how to be an active bystander and promote effective ways to respond to DIPV. During the COVID-19 State of Emergency in New Brunswick, WEB developed a Domestic Violence Fact Sheet providing information on how to recognize domestic violence and how to seek help from existing support services for publication on the Government of New Brunswick’s coronavirus web page, in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Health (Mental Health). This fact sheet includes links to the Love Shouldn’t Hurt Campaign and the Safer Families...Safer Communities resource. WEB and the Department of Public Safety, through the Love Shouldn’t Hurt Campaign, worked together to push out regular educational and informational messages through social media including Facebook and Twitter on a frequent basis throughout the COVID-19 State of Emergency, in order to ensure the general public was aware that services were still available. Messaging was also shared with the voluntary domestic violence sector, crisis line operators (e.g. Chimo), and so on. Social media efforts led to an increased reach of audience members. These tools and resources developed remain accessible to the public and will be published periodically on social media as part of ongoing awareness efforts.

### **Recommendation #9**

The Department of Public Safety and Women’s Equality Branch work with and provide resources to communities to develop and implement regional or local education and awareness strategies focusing on families, friends and co-workers. Strategies should have as a primary goal to assist families, friends and co-workers understand victim’s reality of domestic/intimate partner violence and risk factors for lethality. They should also include measures to support the victim’s access to police and domestic violence prevention services, among others. Strategies should employ a wide variety of communication methods and tools and multiple media platforms to reach across generations and reflect the diversity of New Brunswick communities.

### **Response – Public Safety**

Through the Love Shouldn’t Hurt campaign, DPS commits to increasing the availability of resources and awareness to assist families, friends and co-workers understand (1) what is domestic/intimate partner violence, (2) what are the warning signs that someone they know is experiencing violence, and when might that person be at increased risk of lethality, and (3) how can they support someone they know who is experiencing violence.

The Love Shouldn’t Hurt campaign has already made effort to encourage and support friends, families and co-workers to intervene in D/IPV situations on social media and at in-person events. Love Shouldn’t Hurt has maintained a stock of two focal infographics which depict the types of violence, and warning signs of an abuser and which traits might increase the risk of lethality. In 2019-2020, Love Shouldn’t Hurt added two more hard-copy infographics for distribution: How Can You Help and IPV by the Numbers to provide New Brunswickers with even more information on Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence in New Brunswick. The Love Shouldn’t Hurt campaign has partnered with the Crime Prevention Association of New Brunswick (CPANB) to create booklets distributed via CPANB Board Members and the campaign. The 2020 booklet will focus on supporting friends, families and co-workers to intervene. The Love Shouldn’t Hurt campaign has also made specific efforts to routinely share resources from the D/IPV Workplace toolkit, *DIPV: It’s Your Business* on social media. However, DPS recognizes that more can, and will, be done to support families, friends and co-workers.

Love Shouldn’t Hurt’s new coordinator will be specifically tasked with growing Love Shouldn’t Hurt’s following across social media platforms, with the potential to expand into other platforms to reach multiple generations and reflect the diversity of New Brunswick communities.

### **Response – Women’s Equality Branch**

WEB works with the domestic violence sector through partnerships with Domestic Violence Outreach Workers to deliver public presentations in 14 communities and surrounding areas across the province to thousands of New Brunswickers. The purpose of these presentations is to raise awareness about domestic violence among bystanders, to teach youth about healthy relationships, to promote awareness about services available etc. WEB provides training to the employment sector through its leadership on the New Brunswick DIPV in the Workplace Committee (see response to Recommendation #1), and supports, through programs such as the Community Action Fund, regional initiatives to raise awareness about domestic violence and how communities can become involved in prevention efforts.

WEB provides Danger Assessment training to domestic violence sector as well as those affiliated with it such as police, social workers, health care workers, etc. to be able to assess the risk of lethality in abusive situations among their clients. As the COVID-19 State of Emergency continues to create barriers to providing in-person training, WEB is committed to exploring new ways to deliver effective online training, which can be made available to a wider audience. WEB is committed to raising awareness among the general public about risk factors and understanding the impacts and barriers with respect to domestic violence. And will therefore explore options to provide more public presentations on “Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence 101” which would include a component on risk factors for lethality.

WEB has partnered with the Department of Justice and Attorney General (JAG) to deliver orientation sessions to Emergency Intervention Orders (EIOs) and Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs) in the First Nations Communities and to service providers working with abusers. These orientation sessions include “DIPV Foundations” and identification of risk factors in addition to information about EIOs and EPOs. WEB has facilitated the delivery of training for service providers working with and/or in Aboriginal communities and organizations, as supported Partners for Youth to facilitate dating violence models specific to First Nations Communities and/or Aboriginal youth.

WEB is reviewing its training curriculum and exploring ways to incorporate factors that have contributed to the higher risk of DIPV and domestic homicide among vulnerable or oppressed groups in particular, paying close attention to intersecting vulnerability and risk factors.

When the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Act was enacted, WEB and JAG distributed materials on Emergency Intervention Orders to libraries, family resource centers, hospitals, health centres and hospitals, police, domestic violence serving agencies and lawyers among others to help increase awareness about what EIOs are and how a victim can obtain one. The were not necessarily targeted to victims themselves, but to others who may support victims in other areas of their lives. WEB, JAG and PLEIS-NB continue to distribute these materials to individuals who request them, making presentations and at various events. PLEIS-NB maintains a website with the information to make it more accessible to New Brunswickers. WEB continues to provide support to EIO trainers and provides additional trainings to ensure designated assisters are equipped to support victims through the process of applying for Emergency Intervention Orders.

### **Recommendation #10**

[The Women’s Equality Branch and the Department of Social Development work with the Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence sector service providers to support and strengthen outreach to victims of domestic/intimate partner violence, their families and coworkers.](#)

### **Response – Women’s Equality Branch**

WEB has committed to implementing more regular contact with the domestic violence outreach programs and second stage programs across the province, including all staff involved in the programming, since the beginning of the COVID-19 State of Emergency and moving forward on a regular basis. This includes regular meetings to support outreach workers, sharing of best practise among outreach programs, and streamlining practices and reporting to make the programming more effective. Second Stage Housing coordinators also met regularly with WEB staff. This provided the opportunity for the coordinators to share learnings, to receive information on COVID responses and guidelines and to discuss the support needed to help ensure the safety of their residents and staff. This will continue.

### **Response – Social Development**

This target population is a priority group for the Department of Social Development. This means that SD staff strive to ensure that all necessary supports and services required to facilitate their transition to a safer environment are provided to them in a timely manner. Collaboration between SD staff and other cross governmental and cross-sectional partners is actively encouraged and promoted throughout all SD program areas.

The SD Program Consultant responsible for the Transition House file works in direct collaboration with WEB to actively seek out ways to support and strengthen outreach in all program areas pertaining to this sector. In addition, cross-governmental efforts in conjunction with WEB have created and promoted violence prevention awareness campaigns throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SD Program Consultant responsible for the Transition House file works directly with all 14 Transition House Executive Directors to liaise between their sector and SD to address any issues that could prevent women fleeing domestic/intimate partner violence from transitioning to a life free of violence. In addition, this Consultant will work with this sector to revise standards, identify gaps in service, and work collaboratively with all stakeholders, including WEB.

Under the 10-year *New Brunswick Housing Strategy – A Home for Everyone*, the Province will endeavour to “provide flexible housing options for individuals and families victim of intimate partner/family violence.” Key actions include strengthening and supporting Regional Violence Prevention Networks in all SD Zones, as well as identifying and implementing additional housing options for those affected by intimate partner/family violence, including off reserve Aboriginal individuals and families. In addition, 40 additional second and third stage housing units will be created within the province. This will all be done collaboratively with various governmental and sectoral partners, including WEB.

### **Recommendation #11**

The Departments of Health, Social Development, Public Safety, Justice and Office of the Attorney General and Education and Early Childhood Development with support from the Women’s Equality Branch ensure children who are exposed to and witness domestic violence and domestic homicide have immediate and long-term access to specialized and trauma-informed services at no cost to families.

#### **Response – Health**

Integrated service delivery teams, including front line staff and partners from the departments of Education and Early Childhood Development, Social Development and Public Safety, have received training in trauma informed care throughout the province. This work is on-going as the aim is to ensure a system change in ensuring trauma informed care for children and youth.

#### **Response – Social Development**

The Department of Social Development provides funding to all 14 Transition Houses for the Child Witness of Family Violence Program on a yearly basis and will continue to do so. Additionally, the SD Program Consultant responsible for the Transition House file works directly with all 14 Transition House Executive Directors to liaise between their sector and SD to address any issues involving complex cases on an as needed basis. Therefore, should children require such specialized and trauma-informed services at no cost to families, governmental and sectoral partners would actively case plan to meet the families/children’s needs.

#### **Response – Public Safety**

In 2016, the Roundtable on Crime and Public Safety sanctioned Activity #4 of New Brunswick’s Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy: “review best practices and make recommendations for improvement to the services available to children who are exposed to or who witness domestic/intimate partner violence.” This work was prioritized because children who are exposed to or witness D/IPV are more likely to be abused themselves and are more likely to use violence as their primary means of conflict resolution. Violent behavioral patterns are not limited to childhood but are also likely to persist into adulthood, perpetuating the cycle of violence from one generation to the next. Further, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and other mental health disorders, as well as behavioral problems are often found in children who witness D/IPV, which can have an impact on academic performance and several other aspects of the child’s life. Effectively responding to children who witness D/IPV can reduce risk and support resiliency. While Roundtable members received information on the prevalence of children’s exposure to D/IPV and its impacts at their December 2019 meeting, the final report and its recommendations are forthcoming and will be discussed at a future Roundtable meeting for actioning.

The Child Victims of Abuse and Neglect Protocols, documenting the specific roles and responsibilities of all services provided to children, have been in place for over thirty years. These protocols were established to ensure better communication among government departments and local community organizations that provide support and services to victims of child abuse and neglect, and to children who have witnessed D/IPV and are involved with the criminal justice system.

In addition, protocols have been established for the use of testimonial aids and support persons for vulnerable victims that define the roles and responsibilities of Public Prosecutions, Court Services, and Victim Services. These protocols specify that, Provincial Victim Services delivered by DPS to child victims (age 2-18) include:

- Referrals and payment for counselling by a licensed therapist for the child and non-offending parent who may be required to testify in court where child protection is no longer involved;
- Court preparation and support to child victims using closed circuit or screens, including liaison with Public Prosecutions to determine the suitability of support persons when testimonial aids are used; and
- Several targeted resources are available to adolescent victims of crime and their parents to explain the criminal justice system and services.

Victim Services provides information about, and referral to, the Moving Forward Program. This is a community-based group program available in some locations in New Brunswick to promote healing from the effects of domestic violence for children ages 4-16 and their mothers. Moving Forward is funded through the Women's Equality Branch.

Through the Love Shouldn't Hurt campaign, the Crime Prevention Branch supported the Department of Early Education and Childhood Development (EECD) with the creation of an e-learning module for sexual violence, including specific signs for educators, volunteers and administrators within schools to identify students experiencing violence and protocols for handling disclosures safely and next steps for referrals and reporting. This work was intended to provide those who work in schools the knowledge needed to identify students who may be experiencing or witnessing abuse.

Support was also provided to EECD during the initial COVID-19 lockdown to develop resources and curriculum content for elementary-school-aged children and their parents who may be struggling with violence in the home. Resources focused on validating children's feelings, while reinforcing that abuse is not their fault. Youth-friendly resources were provided for children to learn more, find someone to talk to, and guide children in creating individual safety plans with contact information for safe people to contact, safe places to go, as well as information on how and when to call 911.

DPS will work with partners in other departments and agencies to ensure that children who are exposed to and witness D/IPV and domestic homicide have immediate and long-term access to specialized and trauma-informed services at no cost to families.

### **Response – Justice and Attorney General**

This recommendation is beyond the mandate of the former department of JAG.

### **Response – Education and Early Childhood Development**

The Integrated Services Delivery (ISD) is a child and youth centered approach that enables decision-makers and front-line workers to better work together to meet the needs of children and youth with emotional/behavioural and mental-health concern. Every school and community within the Province are connected to one of the 44 Child and Youth teams. These teams provide the appropriate service (the right service intensity at the right time) according to the needs of the child or youth. This is a public service offered at no cost. Members of the Child and Youth teams have received training regarding Trauma-informed counselling and continue to receive more training.

### **Response – Women's Equality Branch**

WEB is a member of the Roundtable on Crime and Public Safety. WEB led a government and community working group to review best practices and services available for children exposed to domestic intimate partner violence in New Brunswick. Preliminary analysis was shared with the Roundtable in 2019 with findings to be provided later in 2020. WEB also contributed to the development of the Child Sexual Harm Best Practice Review and Needs Analysis and recommendations for the Roundtable on Crime and Public Safety.

WEB has collaborated with EECD, Public Safety and the Department of Health (Mental Health) to develop resources on mental health, domestic violence and supports available to children, families, victims, bystanders and people who use abusive behavior for publication on the Government of New Brunswick's coronavirus web page (see response to Recommendation #3 above), as well as for social media blitzes during the pandemic. This messaging can be used on a

regular basis moving forward, to ensure it is always promoted and accessible to those who use social media, as one way of keeping the public informed.

WEB is supporting the work of EECD on curriculum development and to provide family violence resources for school-aged children, parents and teachers. This work recognizes that children and youth may witness domestic/intimate partner violence in their home or may be subjected to abuse by caregivers or dating partners. The curriculum provided the opportunity for individual study and reflection on self-esteem, what makes a healthy relationship, indicators of health or violent relationships and where one can go to get help.