

THE MMFC AND PARTNERS TO LAUNCH TRAINING FOR SOCIAL WORKERS ON INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

November 19, 2009. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global issue that requires multifaceted responses from both government and community in order to intervene effectively and ultimately eliminate it. New Brunswick is not immune to this issue. In 2004 there were 879 incidents of women abuse reported to the police, not including the unknown number of victims who remain silent. Intervening in situations of intimate partner violence is one of the most difficult aspects of social work practice, and social workers are often the first persons encountered by victims.

As Dr. Carmen Gill, Director of Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (MMFC) at University of New Brunswick stated "Research has shown that IPV is one of the most difficult situations for social workers to intervene." Therefore, MMFC and the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers (NBASW) have partnered to develop training that enables social workers to better intervene in situations of intimate partner violence. This program is tailored towards social workers with a base knowledge of intimate partner violence who will be trained to train their colleagues on this important topic.

On November 19, 2009, a joint press conference will occur at 10:00 a.m. in room 107 of the MMFC (678 Windsor St.) in Fredericton. Dr. Gill, Director; Rina Arseneault, Associate Director, MMFC, Miguel LeBlanc, Director of the NBASW, Norma Dubé, Assistant Deputy Minister, Executive Council, Women's Issues Branch, and Geraldine Poirier Baiani, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Social Development will launch the train-the trainer training program for social workers entitled *Understanding the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence: Helping Social Workers to Better Intervene*.

This training initiative is supported by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, The Honourable Mary Schryer. "I am very pleased that we have been able to partner with the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Center for Family Violence Research and the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers in bringing this training to social workers," said Schryer, "This is another example of government partnering with community organizations to help our province's most vulnerable citizens."

Géraldine Poirier – Baiani, Assistant Deputy Minister, program delivery, Department of Social Development stated: "As the employer of the largest number of social workers in the province, the Department of Social Development is pleased to now have access to specialized curriculum, developed by the MMFC, to further train social workers working with families experiencing Intimate Partner Abuse. Delivery of the new training module will enhance the knowledge and skill base of social work staff to intervene more effectively in situations with adult victims and children exposed to intimate partner abuse. I am very pleased about the today's announcement and our ongoing collaborative working relationship with the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Center for Family Violence Research. "

The training, delivered in both English and French, provides information on how to ensure a positive learning environment, suggestions for ice breakers, addressing biases and stereotypes, as well as identifying difficult questions trainers may encounter about intimate partner violence. It also emphasizes the need to understand various theories and complexities of intimate partner violence in order to effectively intervene. One of the social workers who took part in the pilot training in September, 2009 commented, "The two-day workshop was wonderful and...made a difficult subject much easier to bear."

Miguel LeBlanc, Director of the NB Association of Social Workers stated, "Social Workers' response to situations of intimate partner violence requires a unique set of skills and competencies in order to be successful in their intervention. This is integral for social workers practice in tackling social and personal problems and promoting well-being. We were pleased that Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre, in partnership with the Executive Council Office, Women's Issues Branch, the Department of Social Development and the NBASW have developed this important training to provide social workers with the tools and the knowledge to better intervene in a safe, effective and compassionate way. This training is fully endorsed by our organization and we hope that other agencies across the country will adopt this as a model training guide."

To date, four social workers: Martine Haché, Services à la famille de la Péninsule acadienne, Leslie Monaghan, Department of Social Development, Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, Victim services, Codiac RCMP, Miguel LeBlanc, NBASW, have been trained and are now prepared to deliver training in their agencies; they will be awarded their certificates at this launch.

One of the already-trained social workers, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, said: "The two-day workshop has given me the tools and confidence to train my colleagues, so we'll all be better equipped to handle situations of intimate partner violence."

The train-the-trainer program will be offered to social workers in the province in early 2010.

Established in 1993, Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre (MMFC) develops and offers targeted educational programs designed to understand and prevent family violence and violence against women. Located on the Fredericton campus of the University of New Brunswick, the strength of MMFC relies on the collaborations between academic and community members.

For more information on the training program, contact Rina Arseneault, Associate Director, MMFC, at (506) 455-3595 or fvrc@unb.ca.

Please pass this invitation along to others who might be interested in attending. Thank you!