Evaluation of Phase I of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Violence Prevention Initiative – Report on Consultations

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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Description
AES	Advanced Education and Skills
CAC	Community Advisory Committee
CYFS	Child Youth and Family Services
DOE	Department of Education
EPO	Emergency Protection Orders
GGI	Goss Gilroy Inc.
MNL	Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador
NL	Newfoundland and Labrador
RCC	Regional Coordinating Committee Against Violence
THANL	Transition House Association of NL
VAAT	Violence Awareness and Action Training
VPI	Violence Prevention Initiative
WPO	Women's Policy Office

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1.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings from consultations carried out as part of the evaluation of Phase I of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI). Specifically, the report is based on round table meetings with VPI partners and stakeholders, interviews with Deputy Ministers of departments/agencies[1] that are partners in the VPI and written submissions received by the Women's Policy Office (WPO) through the consultation process.

Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) was engaged by the WPO to organize and facilitate the round table meetings and to conduct the interviews with Deputy Ministers. The report, along with other primary and secondary research conducted by the WPO will inform the overall evaluation of Phase I of the VPI that will be developed by the WPO.

The remainder of the report is organized as follows:

- Section 2 presents the context for the consultations
- Section 3 describes the consultation methodology
- Sections 4 to 8 present the findings in relation to the questions addressed
- Section 9 presents overall considerations for Phase II of the VPI

2.0 Context for the Consultations

2.1 Overview of the VPI

The VPI is designed to respond to the prevalence of violence and its root causes that are evidenced from official data, research on this issue and the experiences of service providers and their clients. The VPI has existed in various forms since the early 2000s. Over that period it has gone through iterations – each designed to build on what has been learned about what works, the impacts of specific actions, and what needs to be fine-tuned or added to the plan.

In the 2005 *Speech from the Throne*, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to a new violence prevention plan with new management and leadership. In consultation with the community and in response to their concerns, the Provincial Government developed an action plan, *Taking Action against Violence 2006-2012*, which constituted Phase I of the VPI. Phase I addressed the root causes of violence through a focus on prevention and early intervention. The

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[1] Report on the interviews with Deputy Ministers is presented as a separate document.

plan included Government's commitments to increasing awareness and attitudinal change, increasing community participation and improving legislation, policy, programs and services. These actions were intended to support women and children leaving abusive situations, Aboriginal women and children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and those marginalized due to sexual orientation, ethnicity, or economic status. The plan also included improved research, leadership and accountability mechanisms to ensure that there were clear roles and responsibilities established to support better government–community collaboration in the implementation of the plan and working toward a common goal.

2.2   Evaluation of Phase I of the VPI

In the 2011 *Speech from the Throne* and the 2011 Policy Blue Book, *New Energy*, the Provincial Government committed to evaluating Phase I of the VPI and developing priorities for Phase II which would build on the strengths of the current plan.

3.0 Consultation Methodology

3.1   Focus of Consultations

The consultation process was implemented by the consultants under the direction of, and in collaboration with, the WPO.

The WPO developed a Discussion Guide *Developing a Phase II Action Plan to Prevent Violence in Newfoundland and Labrador* which highlighted achievements during Phase I of the VPI and included a series of discussion questions to focus input. These questions are set out below. This guide was used for the consultation sessions and was posted on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador homepage and VPI website to solicit written feedback from the public.

Phase I of the VPI Evaluation – Discussion Questions

1. What elements of the current Violence Prevention Initiative would you like to see continue in Phase II?

2. How can the Violence Prevention Initiative improve in Phase II? What would you like to see change?

3. What are the main violence prevention issues that need to be addressed from your perspective?

4. Do you think the following seven strategic priority areas are the right ones for the Violence Prevention Initiative? Why or why not?

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i. Increasing public awareness and attitudinal change about violence against vulnerable populations;
ii. Increasing community participation;
iii. Improving legislation, policy, programs, services, information and facilities;
iv. Supporting Aboriginal women and children;
v. Enhancing research and development;
vi. Improving leadership, coordination and accountability; and
vii. Enhancing education and training to prevent violence.

5. Do you believe that a continued focus on inequality as the root cause of violence is the right approach for the Violence Prevention Initiative?

6. Do you agree with a continued focus on preventing violence against those who are most vulnerable in the province? Are there other vulnerable populations that have not been identified by the Violence Prevention Initiative?

7. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or recommendations?

A gender and diversity analysis was applied in the consultations and reporting, with a focus on each of the VPI's target populations who are particularly vulnerable to violence:

- Women;
- Children;
- Youth;
- Aboriginal women and children;
- Older persons;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Persons of differing sexual orientations;
- Persons of differing ethnicity; and
- Persons of differing economic status.

3.2   Key Informant Interviews

In-person interviews were conducted with each of the 11 Deputy Ministers or their designates. The Discussion Guide questions were used in these interviews.

3.3   Round Table Meetings

This section describes the process for organizing and conducting the round table meetings.

3.3.1   Round Tables with Regional Coordinating Committees Against Violence

Round table meetings were held with each of the ten Regional Coordinating Committees Against Violence (RCCs) in the locations shown below:

- Violence Prevention Labrador - Happy Valley- Goose Bay
- Northern Committee Against Violence - St. Anthony
- Western Regional Coalition to End Violence – Corner Brook
- Southwestern Coalition to End Violence – Stephenville
- Central West Committee Against Violence Inc. – Grand Falls-Windsor
- The Roads to End Violence – Gander
- Eastern Region Committee Against Violence – Clarenville
- Burin Peninsula Voice Against Violence – Marystown
- Communities Against Violence – Bay Roberts
- Coalition Against Violence – St. John's

A letter of invitation from the Honourable Charlene Johnson, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and lead Minister for the Violence Prevention Initiative, was sent to the members of all RCCs. The consultants made contact with the coordinator for each RCC and collaborated in identifying the location and date for each regional meeting. The consultants prepared an email which reiterated the purpose and scheduling of the meeting and instructions on confirming attendance and obtaining approval for travel (where required). The email included a copy of the Discussion Guide and a link to the 2010 *Provincial Survey of Attitudes Towards Violence and Abuse.* The RCC coordinators distributed this email to their members and followed up to confirm the number of attendees. The WPO arranged the meeting space and food/refreshments for all meetings and approved travel arrangements for participants as required.

3.3.2   Partner-Stakeholder Round Table Meetings

Five round table meetings were held with VPI stakeholder organizations in the locations shown below:

- VPI provincial organizations – St. John's
- Aboriginal governments and organizations – Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Community stakeholders – St. John's
- Women's Centres – St. John's
- Transition Houses – St. John's.

A letter of invitation from the Honourable Charlene Johnson, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and lead Minister for the Violence Prevention Initiative, was sent to all invited stakeholder organizations. The consultants collaborated with the WPO in developing a schedule and location for these round table meetings. The consultants sent an email to each organization similar to the one described above for RCC members and followed up with these organizations to confirm attendance. The WPO arranged the meeting space and food/refreshments for all meetings and approved travel arrangements for participants as required.

3.3.3   Round Table Process

A GGI consultant facilitated each round table meeting and took notes. One or two WPO representatives also attended each meeting as an observer.

Each round table followed the agenda below:

1) Introductions;

2) Overview of the VPI evaluation purpose and process;

3) Presentation of highlights from the *2010 Provincial Survey of Attitudes Towards Violence and Abuse* (this was presented by the representative of the WPO in all but two round tables, in which case the GGI consultant delivered the presentation);

4) Discussion of the consultation questions; and

5) Summary / wrap up.

The round table discussions were facilitated in order to enable all participants to share their perspectives on the questions and to document all views expressed. The intent was not to reach a consensus among participants at each round table.

Sessions typically ran for four to five hours, with lunch served mid-way.

3.4   Written Submissions

On May 14, 2012, a news release was issued by the Executive Council to announce that consultations had begun on Phase II of the Violence Prevention Initiative. The news release invited the public to submit written ideas and recommendations for the development of the next violence prevention action plan and indicated that consultation sessions with partners and stakeholders were scheduled for the coming weeks. In total, four written submissions were received and included in the analysis and findings in this report.

FINDINGS

Sections 4.0 to 8.0 that follow provide a synthesis of the findings from the round tables based on the opinions expressed by participants. For some findings, it is noted where the Violence Prevention Initiative offered additional contextual information.

4.0   Main violence prevention issues that need to be addressed

The following issues were raised by participants of one or more roundtables.

Awareness of violence

Understanding "violence"

There is a need for more understanding of what constitutes violence. For example, some behaviours in school are considered "okay"or "a joke", when these in fact constitute violence. It also was noted, for example, that families at risk do not realize the impact of verbal abuse on their children and the resulting ramifications for future generations as these children then incorporate this behaviour into their adult life.

There is insufficient understanding of how different cultures (intergenerational culture of poverty; youth culture; drug culture) contribute to/facilitate violence.

Lack of understanding of the dynamics of violence results in some continuing to blame the victims for their situations.

A culture of denial

In some regions, there is a culture of denial about violence, i.e., "it is not happening in this region." Some of this was seen as emanating from old school patriarchal views and power and a focus on "we solve our own problems." This was seen to lead to a "cover up" of family violence and result in women denying they are experiencing violence because of the lack of support in the communities where they are living.

Specific groups that experience violence

Violence against women

Violence against women remains a significant issue and one which must continue to be profiled.

School Violence

School bullying is considered a pervasive issue with some feeling it is a much more intractable problem in rural school environments. It was explained that in a rural school, students can't find their niche as easily as they can in an urban school because there are not as many options available to them for engaging with like minded peers. For example, a student who is considered a "geek" might be able to participate in a computer club or a chess club in a larger school in a larger centre; however in a rural school these options might not be available and the child might feel isolated – leaving him/her more open to being a victim of violence. Additionally, smaller rural schools make it more difficult to escape a perpetrator, as there are fewer peer groups/networks from which to seek security and support.

Social media

An overarching theme was violence, in particular bullying, perpetrated through social media such as Facebook and via cell phone/texting. Negative messages can be conveyed immediately and it is more difficult for the victim to escape this form of violence. Overall there was considerable concern across round tables on the complexity and fast-moving pace of the impacts the social media is having, particularly for young people. There was a sense that this issue needs a comprehensives stocktaking and multi-faceted action within the VPI and in collaboration with other partners.

Some felt that cyber violence has a significant impact on the LGBT community, e.g., "that's so gay" is a common and accepted term.

Parents are not sufficiently knowledgeable in the language of social media, e.g., the various acronyms being used. This constrains their efforts to address cyberviolence against their children.

Technology and violence

Younger children are increasingly using computers, cell phones, iphones and iPads. It was felt that not all parents are attending to what their children are seeing/doing, especially the violent games they are playing online. It was acknowledged that censoring violent games/activities

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online is a major challenge for parents as children/youth can go elsewhere (e.g., a friend's house) to continue to engage in these activities.

Advertisements on websites are sometimes offensive and perpetrate violence. There is a need to better understand what children and youth are seeing online and how this is impacting their behaviour.

Violence against men and boys

There is little recognition that men can experience violence and there are even fewer supports/services available to this population. However, it was noted that under-reporting is a problem for both men and women. Boys are a vulnerable group as well, and it was felt that the Violence Prevention Initiative does not have the same focus on this population as it does girls. [The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- The Violence Prevention Initiative addresses violence against **all** children and youth regardless of gender;
- An in-depth analysis of RNC and RCMP reported crime data in Newfoundland and Labrador shows that female and male children under the age of eighteen in our province experience similar rates of violence:
  - Approximately 51% of all reported violence committed against children under the age of eighteen in Newfoundland and Labrador between 2006 and 2010 (inclusive) was perpetrated against female children;
  - Approximately 49% of all reported violence committed against children under the age of eighteen in Newfoundland and Labrador between 2006 and 2010 (inclusive) was perpetrated against male children;
- For this reason, Violence Prevention Initiative efforts address violence against all children and youth, both boys and girls.]

Violence against older people

Some felt that respect for older people has waned and violence against older persons has become normalized.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- Both the Violence Prevention Initiative (see Taking Action Against Violence 2006-2012, p. 8) and the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework (goals #25 and #27) have identified the reduction of violence against older adults as a policy and program objective;
- The Women's Policy Office and the Division of Aging and Seniors (HCS) partnered in 2007-08 to contract a company to develop a social marketing campaign using a gender equity lens around the prevention of various forms of violence against older persons. Posters, print ads, radio ads and brochures were developed and launched to time with

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in June 2008; and

- Budget 2008-09 made a commitment to invest $800,000 over four years ($200,000 per year) to develop, deliver and evaluate training for the recognition, prevention and intervention of violence against older adults for a number of target populations. This training and education project is being led by the Office of Aging and Seniors and the Women's Policy Office.]

Violence in Aboriginal communities

Those who have experience working with Aboriginal communities identified that violence is a significant issue demanding more attention.

Violence against immigrants

Immigrant women are considered to be at risk of violence for many reasons. These include language barriers and thus difficulty communicating and cultural "norms" for women.
It was stated that there needs to be more understanding on both the part of immigrant parents and social workers/child protection workers on discipline practices. It was felt that social workers and child protection workers need to better understand cultural nuances, for example, even if a child in an immigrant family is being abused, they likely will not speak up in front of their parents.

Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation/human trafficking have to be named and understood as forms of violence. Currently, sexual exploitation is not well contextualized. Many see it as a service young women provide to men. There are legalized massage parlours in the province where sexual exploitation is perpetuated.

There has to be more information on the factors which make individuals vulnerable to this activity. Further, there are few specialized services available to support these populations.

Services/ supports

Access to services

In general, there are insufficient services available to people experiencing violence with the demand outweighing the response. This issue is magnified in rural and remote areas where isolation can put people at additional risk of being victimized.

It was identified that in at least one region Victims Services and Adult Probation are co-located. This was felt to potentially put some victims at further risk of violence and abuse.

Remedial help for offenders

There is a significant gap in remedial/rehabilitative programming for offenders and those at risk of offending. For example, there is only one pilot for Family Violence Court and one for Mental Health Court and both are in St. John's. It was noted that some offenders who recognize they need help request federal time from the courts so they can access the programs they need.

Duty to report

The general public does not understand their responsibility and duty to report abuse. While the VPI undertook a "Duty to Report" campaign, some felt that the message requires additional clarification.

Social issues

Poverty

There is a growing income divide in the province which can lead to stigma and violence. People living in poverty may not have a phone, computer or transportation, all of which constrain their access to information and support. The resulting isolation puts them at a higher risk of experiencing and being unable to escape violence.

Poor labour market

Unemployment/economic downturns can be significant stressors in families and a precursor to violence. In a few round tables, concerns were raised about the changes to eligibility for Employment Insurance which could lead to violence among those who lose benefits.

"Big city" issues

Across the province, it is perceived that increasing numbers of children and youth are abusing drugs (including prescription medications and "harder" street drugs) and alcohol. It was perceived that these addictive behaviours are catalysts for violence.

Emerging areas of violence

There is a perception of increased violence in sport which is condoned and often encouraged.

Workplace violence is perceived as a growing and often unrecognized concern.

5.0 Perspectives on the priority areas being the "right ones" for the VPI

5.1 Increasing public awareness and attitudinal change about violence against vulnerable populations

There was general agreement that the VPI has a critical role in increasing public awareness of and facilitating attitudinal change about violence, in particular against vulnerable populations. The survey results were cited as evidence that this awareness raising is having impact and so efforts to build on it are warranted.

Campaigns

Overall, participants saw tremendous value in continuing the social media campaigns on violence prevention to reinforce and build on these key messages.

It was noted that the next phases of these campaigns should focus on showing not only "what" to do in relation to violence prevention, but "how" to do it.

The Respect Women campaign was highlighted by most to have been especially recognizable and effective. A very small number of participants felt that the campaign is somewhat disempowering to women, as the message seems to be that men have the power to make the difference in the lives of women.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- In 2009, a post-evaluation survey of the Respect Women campaign was conducted.
- Survey results reveal that as a result of the Respect Women campaign, there has been a substantial increase/change in:
  - public awareness of the nature and severity of male violence against women;
  - public attitudes of male violence against women in Newfoundland and Labrador; and
  - public knowledge of services and resources available to victims of male violence;
- Post-evaluation survey results indicate the following:
  - 13.6% increase in the belief that society, as a collectivity, is responsible for combating and eliminating male violence against women;
  - 9.4% increase in the identification of Shelters/Transition Houses as a service that helps victims of male violence against women;
  - 8.1% believe in increased education and awareness as a means of eliminating male violence against women (through schools and government programs);
  - 5.1% decrease in the belief that women are responsible for combating and eliminating male violence against women; and

- o 2.5% decrease in the belief that the victim is responsible for combating and eliminating male violence against women; and
- All survey results were positive in nature. Women in the general public did not indicate a feeling of disempowerment as a result of the campaign.]

The Purple Ribbon campaign was viewed very positively and described by a few participants as the hallmark of the awareness campaigns, as the ribbons are "everywhere." It was highlighted that campaign materials must continue to be available for distribution because these are a very visible marketing tool for promoting violence prevention.

The campaign focused on the duty to report child abuse was referenced by a small number of participants as having merit. It was felt there is still a lack of understanding of the duty to report by the general public.

The Violence Against Older Persons campaign and OutrageNL also were raised by a few participants as valuable for raising awareness on the abuse that older persons and youth respectively can experience. Participants felt that these ads can have further reach by targeting new means of advertising such as social media in addition to traditional media.

Key considerations for future campaigns

There were different views on which populations should be profiled in future campaigns. Some participants felt that, in addition to continuing with the current campaigns, there should be efforts to design campaigns for the remaining populations identified by the VPI such as the LGBT population and persons of differing ethnicity or race. In contrast, others felt that the campaigns should be more "person" oriented instead of segregating populations according to a specific identifying factor (e.g., gender, disability or age). Rather the focus should be about respect in general and ending violence against all people. It was felt this approach would help everyone "see" themselves in the VPI and as part of the solution to violence.

A few participants who were not familiar with the VPI campaigns noted that they should reflect diversity regardless of the population in question. For example, it was noted that the Respect Women campaign could incorporate women from diverse backgrounds, the Violence Against Older Persons campaign could incorporate Aboriginal elders, and OutrageNL could profile LGBT youth.

[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- The goal of the Respect Women campaign is to prevent male violence against women. Two primary target audiences for the Respect Women campaign are men in the general public and men who are/ may be violent. For this reason, the Respect Women campaign features images of men and boys of various diverse backgrounds and not women from diverse backgrounds;

- The Violence Against Older Persons campaign does incorporate images of Aboriginal elders; and
- The faces of youth in the OutrageNL campaign are not shown. This was done for the explicit purpose so that the youth featured in the ad would represent all youth regardless of their sexual orientation, ethnic background, ability, or socioeconomic status.]

A few participants noted that the VPI should ensure that when developing campaigns, the process include representatives of those being profiled so that their "voice" and experiences are accurately reflected.

[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- When developing a social marketing campaign, the Violence Prevention Initiative consistently establishes a Working Committee consisting of both community partners and Provincial government representatives to help guide the development of the campaign; and
- Examples of this social marketing Working Committee consultation process include the following:
  - Youth in the community were consulted throughout the development of the OutrageNL campaign to ensure the campaign was appropriate for youth; and
  - A Working Committee of approximately 20 individuals consisting of both community partners and Provincial government representatives was established in 2009 to help develop the Respect Women campaign.]

Some participants cited the need to ensure that campaigns resonate in rural areas of the province. As an example, it was noted that students in rural schools face additional pressures because "everyone knows everyone and their business". Due to smaller school populations, it is more difficult to escape the perpetrators.

One caution voiced was to ensure that campaign imagery does not result in people becoming desensitized to violence because they "see it everywhere." This speaks to the need for clarity on messaging and a significant focus in campaigns on positive action and empowerment, in addition to the focus on raising awareness of violence.

[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- This is a current and ongoing practice of the Violence Prevention Initiative in all work that is undertaken;
- All Violence Prevention Initiative social marketing campaigns focus on positive action and empowerment as well as raising awareness about violence and abuse; and
- All existing campaigns not only create a greater level of awareness and education among residents of the province about the incidence, forms and unacceptability of violence but they also build on the "Reach Out. Take Action Against Violence" slogan that is

currently being used as the tag line for existing Violence Prevention Initiative social marketing campaigns.]

It was suggested that as the VPI moves forward with campaigns, it focus on learnings and effective practices from other social marketing campaigns which have demonstrated results and which can be adapted by the VPI. An example cited was that of the smoking cessation campaigns.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:

- As a component of the social marketing campaign development process, the Violence Prevention Initiative consistently undertakes extensive research to identify similar campaigns and best practices in other jurisdictions throughout the country and globally that have demonstrated results;
- The Violence Prevention Initiative will continue to engage in this practice.

Role of the RCCs

The RCCs see a role for their committees in developing campaigns. They note they can provide the community/grass roots perspective and equally importantly ensure campaigns reflect the realities of the rural experience.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:

- Regional Coordinating Committees against Violence are represented on all Violence Prevention Initiative social marketing campaign Working Committees.

Many RCC participants felt that provincial campaigns should be incorporating the key message that there are regional committees focused on violence prevention and provide their contact information. This was seen to be one approach to raising the profile of the RCCs and establishing their connection to the provincial initiative.

It was felt by some RCC participants that improved branding of the committees would better identify their role and links to the provincial initiative. It was suggested that consideration be given to a single consistent name across RCCs instead of each having their own: for example, VPI-NL, VPI-Eastern and VPI-St. John's.

Awareness raising materials

It was stated that the VPI should ensure that all its awareness raising material, e.g., fact sheets and its website, are up to date, clear, in plain language and accessible. It was noted by a few participants that the VPI materials should be reviewed with a cultural lens for cultural sensitivity

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to Aboriginal and ethnic populations and modified accordingly. As well, materials should be available in other prevalent languages.

The suggestion was that the VPI use a range of media and mediums to raise awareness about violence prevention, including public discussions/panels and radio and television (including local cable stations). In relation to radio and television, it was noted that the VPI should place ads when a particular target audience is listening/watching. It was also noted that there should be more focus on using social media, such as Facebook and "pop-ups", which are more likely to reach young people. It was felt that this broad-based approach would increase the VPI's reach, especially to populations with limited literacy.

It was suggested that the VPI give consideration to developing a basic presentation on violence prevention, which could be used by the RCCs and partners/stakeholders. This would result in consistent messages on violence prevention being disseminated across populations and regions.

The link to the VPI should be moved up on the government of NL homepage. It was stated that it used to be more immediately visible when this page was opened but now one has to scroll down to find it.

A written submission from the public suggested that the Angel's Corner at the intersection of Prescott and Duckworth, a lovely display that is focused on awareness of violence against women, could be enhanced by adding a phone number or email address where people in need can go to find help.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- Although the Violence Prevention Initiative was a member of the Angel's Corner Project Advisory Committee, this project was led by the City of St. John's. The Advisory Committee was Chaired by Councillor Sheilagh O'Leary.]

Specific populations highlighted for attention

There should be an enhanced focus on multicultural issues because, as some stated, racism is not always overt but it does exist. It was felt that immigrants often experience isolation, which makes them more vulnerable to violence. As well, men in immigrant households often hold the balance of power and women do not know their rights given they are operating within cultural norms. A number of participants raised the concern that the influx of immigrant workers could create tension in the province and result in increased discrimination.

Violence against older persons and ageism were raised as issues demanding further and more focused attention. Disrespect and abuse were considered by some to have become the norm and this is increasing older people's risk of being victimized. In particular, it was raised that there

needs to be a focus on supporting Aboriginal elders – with some stating there has been a cultural shift away from respect. This was seen to be compounded by the elders' lack of awareness of their own rights and lack of culturally responsive services across the province to support those who are being victimized.

There is still a significant need to focus on violence prevention in relation to women, children and youth.

There is a need for professionals (in particular medical professionals) and the general public to better understand the dynamics and factors which constrain women from leaving violent situations. It also is important there be a consistent message that violence is more than a women's issue.

More awareness is needed on the various forms of abuse and violence which children and youth face.

Children and youth (and their parents) must be educated on safe practices for using social media. As an example, it was cited that girls are putting pictures of themselves on the web but they do not realize this can be used in creating child pornography.

There is a need to have a more substantive focus on the LGBT population and, in particular, their school experiences.

Some participants felt there is a need to identify that men also can be victims of violence.

Specific issues highlighted for attention

There is a need to debunk the myth that having a mental illness means you are more prone to be violent.

The general public has to better understand the realities of sexual violence/assault including the meaning of consent. It was noted, for example, that when drugs and alcohol are at play, teenage boys do not realize they are committing sexual assault and the girls involved do not understand they have been victimized.
Child pornography is a form of child sexual exploitation and this should be named. As well, human trafficking should be profiled.

The VPI should have more focus on informing on social issues which can contribute to violence, such as the increasing rates of addiction and homelessness, loss of jobs, downturn in the economy and living in poverty.

There is a need for a focus on workplace violence and employers' and employees' individual and collective responsibilities to ensure safe workplaces. Included in this would be messages about how to support individuals experiencing domestic violence and what to do if a perpetrator shows up at a workplace.

5.2   Increasing community participation

A key message from the roundtables was the need for the broader community to recognize that violence prevention is "everyone's responsibility" and can impact anyone, particularly those whose circumstances or backgrounds make them vulnerable. It is a societal issue which demands community participation and partnership.

It was acknowledged that community participation on violence prevention can be a challenge, as people have many priorities competing for their attention. The VPI must disseminate information on the many ways individuals and communities can get involved. The awareness campaigns are seen as an important vehicle for conveying this information. Some noted that strong visible provincial government leadership on violence prevention and demonstrated accountability for the VPI can encourage the general public to "buy in" and become involved.

RCC outreach capacity

Some RCC participants expressed a need to expand their outreach activity to increase connections to and partnerships in more rural and remote communities in their regions outside the core urbanized areas. They felt this onsite presence would build on the efforts of the provincial campaigns to raise awareness of violence-related issues in the regions and enable more effective targeted activity to address issues unique to their region. Further, it was felt this would facilitate more regional RCC membership and engagement of the general public, as they would see activity which has resonance for their communities.

Some of the RCCs said they had insufficient capacity to undertake this kind of community outreach within the funding currently available from the VPI. Some cited limited staff resources noting one staff cannot connect with the many communities in their vast geographic regions. Even identifying key liaisons/leaders in more rural and remote areas of regions was seen to be a challenge for one staff person.

It was felt that increased and stable funding would support retention of quality skilled staff for the RCC Coordinator position, enable increased staff administrative support and the additional travel and resources to support violence prevention efforts throughout regions. In particular,

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some RCCs felt that with increased staff capacity they could undertake more training throughout their regions and strengthen grassroots' participation in, and capacity for, violence prevention.

A few RCC participants also identified the importance of having a sufficient level of funding to support individuals and communities to participate in violence prevention events. For example, depending on the event or activity (e.g., family day; workshop on violence against women) funding might be required to pay entertainers/presenters and/or provide child care, transportation and refreshments. Having access to an increased level of funding also could support small grants to catalyze activity in rural and remote locations, when RCC staff and members are not able to be on the ground in these communities.

Regional participation of government partners

To varying degrees, the RCCs have stable and diverse membership including representatives of youth organizations, immigrant groups, women's centres and shelters, as well as government services such as AES, Regional Health Authorities and Justice. The importance of these members being actively involved both in the RCCs and in spreading key messages on violence prevention within their own networks was noted as critical to support the efforts needed at the regional level.

Some of the RCCs expressed difficulty securing and maintaining representation from government partners at the regional level. They said that some of their government members are not provided time off to attend their RCC meetings and events or are not supported to attend other relevant violence prevention sessions and training. It was felt that Ministers of partner departments should be conveying a message to their regional staff that the VPI is an important initiative and one in which they must be actively participating, including by disseminating violence prevention messages in their own work. It was felt that the VPI Secretariat has an ongoing role to play in ensuring the partner departments are taking leadership.

Collaboration with community partners/stakeholders

Collaboration of the RCCs, VPI partners and stakeholders was noted by some to be critical for community engagement. By working together these parties can extend the reach of violence prevention messaging and engage diverse populations in related efforts. It was felt that enhanced opportunities for meetings between these VPI parties on a provincial level would enable regional partnerships.

It was suggested that to facilitate involvement by and representation from municipalities, who are seen to be a critical but missing player, the VPI approach Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL) to become a partner in the initiative. Some groups noted that municipalities are

helpful now in providing RCC's with space and other in-kind help for events, but they could play a more active leadership role in raising awareness of violence and violence prevention. Some also cited a need for Aboriginal leaders/organizations to be more engaged in the VPI by, for example, encouraging membership to RCCs and supporting violence prevention activities with their populations.

Other populations which were not seen to be sufficiently engaged in the VPI included men, with a few participants citing a need for targeted recruitment of this population to RCCs and giving them meaningful roles. Parents also were seen to be insufficiently involved. Yet, they are considered critical for providing clear messages to their children on violence prevention and modeling relevant behaviours such as respect and acceptance of differences between and among populations.

Effective approaches to community participation

A number of approaches for increasing community ownership of, and participation in, the VPI were identified including the following.

It was noted that engagement of the general public can be challenging because not all are connected to a network or organization and other ways have to be found to link with them. One suggestion was to identify central gathering places in communities where information can be dispersed and opportunities for discussion arranged. It also would be important to identify community allies (individuals and organizations) whose participation and leadership would be critical for broader community buy-in.

Other community-wide approaches include holding events which are open to all members of a community, piggy backing awareness on "fun events" such as a community walk or barbecue, and holding high profile events which can be tailored to the needs of each community, e.g., Take Back the Night. Widespread distribution of the VPI materials, in particular the purple ribbons, was seen to be important for raising awareness of and interest in this initiative.

There is a need to recognize that community engagement can be more focused and opportunities for engaging with specific sectors/segments of the population also must be identified. For example, an informal caregiver support group helps caregivers address the many stressors associated with their role which could lead to violence. A youth conference provides a venue for engaging in a number of topics of interest to the young people and relevant to violence prevention.

Some VPI stakeholders also have identified effective practices in engaging communities and populations in their violence prevention efforts. These should be shared so others can benefit

from their experiences. Opportunities for increased provincial networking as referenced previously would support this sharing.

5.3   Enhancing education and training to prevent violence

Education and training on violence prevention were considered to be a need along the lifespan from primary prevention at the prenatal stage up to and including older persons.

Violence Awareness and Action Training (VAAT)

The VPI has recognized the need to update the VAAT's language, imagery and statistics and in general ensure it is current, resonates with a range of audiences and is consistent with the VPI's guiding principles and philosophy. Some participants welcomed these enhancements as all saw value in continuing VAAT. A few additional suggestions were put forward to improve the training including:

- Trained facilitators should provide input on VAAT as it is updated

- There has been staff turnover in the RCCs and this necessitates refocusing on training trainers to deliver VAAT.

VAAT training should be a two-day session as one day does not provide sufficient time to adequately cover all the topics.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- VAAT training was initially a two-day training event. VAAT was condensed to a one-day session based on feedback from partner departments and agencies, as well as VAAT participants. In some cases, partner departments and agencies were having difficulty releasing employees to attend a two-day training session. To accommodate partner departments and agencies, VAAT was condensed to a one-day training session so as to ensure participation in the program.]

Perhaps VAAT could have a series of core modules/templates which present key messages and which can be tailored to the unique needs of the region/group to which it is being delivered. This model might also allow for the VPI partners and stakeholders to be more actively involved in delivering training.

It was stated that the VPI Secretariat should work with partner departments to ensure their Ministers, departmental and regional staff understand the value of VAAT. It was felt VAAT should be mandatory for all partner department staff at the department and regional levels.

RCC training gaps

Some of the RCC participants identified the following knowledge gaps which they feel must be addressed if they are to continue to improve their capacity for violence prevention in their regions.

Vulnerable populations

- Information on the LGBT population, in particular what puts them at risk of violence

  A few participants felt that as the MyGSA initiative begins in earnest in schools, the RCCs will field increased requests for information on related issues and services. RCCs will need to be better equipped to support communities to be more responsive to the LGBT population as their issues are revealed.
- Cultural sensitivity

  With increasing numbers of immigrants coming to work in rural areas of the province, there is a need to better understand their practices, issues and concerns.

- Human trafficking

  This was raised by a small number of participants as an emerging area and one on which there is little understanding.

Building RCC capacity

- How to use social media as a violence prevention tool. This should include training on how the Internet and social media impact violence.

- Board governance/running effective committees

- Undertaking community-based research

- Conducting public meetings/information sessions

Approaches to education and training

A few participants felt there should be enhanced focus on technology (e.g., online learning modules, video conferencing) to increase access to and participation in training although others were adamant that training should be in-person. It was highlighted that training sessions should

not only create awareness and understanding of the issues but have a focus on moving to solutions and building on what is working.

The annual VPI conference and the annual CAC meeting were cited as important not only for information exchange and networking, but also as opportunities for education and training. Having a theme for the VPI conference (e.g., on one of the vulnerable populations) was noted to be an effective approach.

Violence prevention and the education system

K-12

There was much discussion across roundtables on the need for enhanced education and training in the K-12 school system. The overarching issue cited is that the school curriculum is full and so there is little opportunity for community organizations to hold information/awareness sessions in schools.

It was felt that violence prevention is seen as an "add on" when the mandated curriculum is covered. While many schools actively participate in specific one-time/one-day events (e.g., Stand Up for Bullying Day), this is not seen to provide the grounding needed on the many and varied aspects of violence prevention.

A number of participants said there is need for dedicated time in the school day to explain what violence is, who experiences violence and what students can do to prevent violence, and to increase opportunities to address learned negative behaviour. Participants who have had more success in working with and getting into schools cited this collaboration as a powerful tool for raising awareness on violence prevention and for working on activities designed to deliver and reinforce key messages.

Many participants agreed that the Department of Education (DOE) should ensure the inclusion of violence prevention as a core focus in the curriculum and one which crosses subject areas/course content. There were many topics cited for inclusion including: what violence is and entails; what bullying is and how it differs from criminal acts of violence; inappropriate behaviour; sexual exploitation; healthy relationships; building tolerance, empathy and respect; and positive peer mentoring. It was felt that the VPI Secretariat could lend its expertise in this curriculum development and as well seek input from the RCCs.

A few participants cited the need for more synergy between the DOE's Safe and Caring Schools Initiative and the VPI. It was stated, for example that there should be violence prevention

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representatives on schools' Safe and Caring Schools committees and more collaboration with the RCCs/partners and stakeholders in undertaking safe and caring schools activities.

Teacher training

A related issue is teacher training on violence prevention. Again due to the limited availability of professional development days in light of many competing priorities, violence prevention training with school staff was considered to be restricted. It was suggested that the focus on training for violence prevention be given the same priority as that which is currently being afforded training on MyGSA.

Post-secondary

It was stated there also should be a focus on violence prevention, including cultural sensitivity and gender analysis, in post secondary curricula/programs especially those disciplines focused on social services (e.g., social work), education and the humanities. Additionally, there should be more encouragement for student placements in agencies working to prevent violence and/or supporting victims.

Pre-school children

Some participants also felt there should be an enhanced focus on violence prevention at the pre-school level, with public health nurses and child care consultants having a role to play in this regard. Similarly, Family Resource Centres should be utilized as key venues for training and information dissemination on violence prevention, as they have access to parents, caregivers and guardians and their children on a daily basis.

Existing education and training programs

It was highlighted that if education and training programs are demonstrating success in supporting violence prevention efforts in regions and elsewhere, this information should be shared across RCCs and the VPI partners and stakeholders. A number were cited during the roundtable consultations and these included the following.

- Empowerment programs for women who have experienced violence, such as those delivered in or by the shelters. These include a focus on building self-esteem and self-respect, and peer mentoring.

- Roots of Empathy (ROE) is an evidence-based classroom program that has shown significant effect in reducing levels of aggression among schoolchildren by raising

social/emotional competence and increasing empathy. Two areas of anticipated skill development for children are *inclusion*, as the program has a focus on celebrating and acknowledging differences, and *violence prevention* as it focuses on developing strong emotional and empathetic skills which counter and diminish negative behaviours. The program reaches elementary school children from Kindergarten to Grade 8.

- Families and Schools Together (FAST) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping communities build protective factors around kids. The Community Education Network, a collaborative of community-government organizations that includes the Southwestern Coalition to End Violence, operates on the west coast of the province. CEN introduced FAST in the Bay St. George area many years ago. FAST is an inclusive approach that aims to reach at risk families. It gives them space to be a family during an eight-week program (including community meals), and follow-up FAST families meet less frequently. They grow on their own with supports. The program breaks isolation (a key issue) – all walks of life attend the meals and the program is considered a huge success in creating community engagement in supporting others.

- Community in Schools (CIS) is another CEN initiative described as a network of passionate professionals working in public schools to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. CIS works within the public school system, determining student needs and establishing relationships with local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers, and parent and volunteer organizations to provide needed resources so that students can focus on learning.

5.4   Enhancing research and development

There was general agreement across roundtables that it is important for the VPI to continue to focus on research and development. It was stated that evidenced-based research is key and "hard data" is essential for understanding trends in relation to violence, for ongoing evaluation of the difference being made by VPI efforts and activities and to inform government legislation and policy.

Most participants cited the importance of following up on the attitudinal survey now that a baseline has been established. It was suggested that the VPI Secretariat reformat the survey results to make them more user-friendly to the public (charts of highlights with narrative interpretation of results) and ensure relevant data is incorporated into violence prevention campaigns.

Participants raised a number of areas for future research, often emanating from their own areas of interest and/or focus. These included: more research on the issues facing the LGBT population;

how homelessness and housing instability can put women who have experienced violence at additional risk; and the impact of social media on rates and type of violence. More generally, there was an interest in assessing the incidence of violence, root causes and effective practices for violence prevention and supporting victims.

Of note, some participants highlighted the importance of the VPI continuing to have a focus on participatory research to ensure target populations have a voice in the design and implementation of related processes.

Collaboration on data collection

A number of participants raised the importance of partnership and collaboration for strengthening the VPI's research capability and capacity. As an example, a few participants said that the VPI should work with the RCMP and RNC to identify opportunities for revising their statistical categories to capture additional information which would be critical to inform the incidence of and trends on violence.

It was raised by some RCC participants that they would be interested in and should be supported to undertake some of the critical community-based research needed to inform the ongoing efforts and direction of the VPI.

Interpreting data

In general, participants recognized the value of the *Provincial Survey of Attitudes towards Violence and Abuse* in identifying unique regional issues and in informing responses. A few RCC participants said they would need help in interpreting the data so as to effectively inform their direction, raise awareness of regional violence related issues and get "buy in" from a range of stakeholders, potential partners and the public.

5.5   Improving leadership, coordination and accountability

On a regional level, it is expected the RCCs will provide leadership in, and be accountable for, engaging partners/stakeholders, undertaking public awareness and education activities, facilitating information sharing and referral, and coordinating violence prevention efforts and activities. Some RCC participants spoke to the level of autonomy they have in relation to responding to the unique needs and priorities in their regions. However, it also was highlighted that there has to be a strong connection to the VPI Secretariat to enable synergy of activity.

Some participants stated that the VPI Secretariat needs additional staff support. They suggested the addition of a staff resource who would liaise with the RCCs, stakeholders and partners and implement streamlined approaches for communicating with them.

It was suggested by some participants that the VPI Secretariat staff should be more visible in the regions and that there be more face-to-face provincial meetings of the VPI Secretariat and RCCs. They felt that a strong connection between the RCCs and the VPI Secretariat would ensure all parties are clear on their mandate, roles and responsibilities and expectations for outcomes, thus increasing accountability by all involved.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- All RCCs have a contractual arrangement with the WPO for funding; and
- Governance training was delivered in 2009 to all RCCs including roles, expectations, work plans, and contractual obligations.]

It was felt by some RCC participants that the VPI Secretariat also has a role to play in facilitating stronger linkages between and among the RCCs. This would contribute to idea exchange and replication of violence prevention programs and practices which one or more RCCs identify as working well.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

A few RCC participants highlighted the CAC as an important link with government as it is an opportunity to share current and emerging issues and discuss related solutions. As well, it is considered a vehicle for learning about related government initiatives and opportunities to build on these on a regional basis.

Some RCC participants felt that the CAC, which has not met regularly of late, has become ineffective. It was stated that attendance from government members has waned and there is little time for information sharing and discussion on critical issues at meetings. Rather, the focus seems to only be on Provincial Government violence prevention activities. It was stated there is a need to review the Community Advisory Committee's membership, function and focus.

Strengthening communication and connections with stakeholders

A number of stakeholder participants stated they were unclear on the role of the RCCs and what activities fall within their mandate. A few also said that the RCCs are not sufficiently engaged with and/or supporting other key stakeholders in their regions in undertaking violence prevention activities. It was felt this isolation has resulted in duplication of effort and/or gaps in needed violence prevention activity.

Some stakeholders expressed a need for clarity on their relationship to the VPI. They cited a need for clear delineation of roles and expectations for stakeholders, which would allow for more effective use of their time and resources.

In addition, it was stated that the VPI should have more public engagement with stakeholders and partners – for example, attending their major public events. Further, some expressed an interest in being better informed of VPI activity through for example regular meetings/conference calls and updates.

A few participants also cited the importance of the partners/stakeholders being given the opportunity to input into VPI initiatives and campaigns because they too have a level of expertise to bring to the discussions and development work.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:
- When developing a social marketing campaign, the Violence Prevention Initiative consistently establishes a Working Committee consisting of both community partners and Provincial government representatives to help guide the development of the campaign;
- Regional Coordinating Committees against Violence have had RCC representation on the Working Committees associated with each of the four Violence Prevention Initiative campaigns.

A small number of participants suggested that at this stage in its evolution, the VPI might want to consider whether there are other key partnerships to be formed to support the initiative.

One specific request was that the AnanauKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association (ATRIWA) which was established in 2007 should be included as a VPI partner.

5.6 Improving legislation, policy, programs, services, information and facilities

It was noted that vulnerable populations have a hierarchy of needs including finding shelter, having sufficient income and generally accessing a range of responsive programs and services. Many participants felt these needs require a continuum of policy and program responses and that the VPI could support the change needed to effect this through ongoing collaboration with their partner departments.

A few participants remarked that attitudinal change in and of itself does not always lead to behaviour change and thus policy development and legislative change must be undertaken in tandem with raising awareness among government staff at all levels. The VPI therefore should ensure an ongoing strong focus on educating their partner departments on the realities of violence and victims, and informing required policy change. Some noted that there should be an

overall holistic government approach in using a violence prevention lens for developing legislation, policies and programs.

Some RCC participants stated they should be given an opportunity to influence and inform policy change as they have an important community-based perspective to share and ideas to contribute. They would like to be informed in a timely manner of policy consultations being held so they can participate. Further, some felt there should be more focus on the RCCs putting forward proposed policies changes based on what they are seeing and hearing in their day-to-day work.

Department of Education

A small number of participants raised the need for alternative schools for those who cannot function within the current K-12 framework because, for example, of mental health and anxiety issues. It was felt that many in this group leave school early. It was stated there is a need to look at different ways of learning and teaching to break cycles of poverty and illiteracy and thus remove some of the risk factors for violence.

Some raised a similar concern about the traditional system of suspension in which youth are "put out" for several days with no requirement for participating in "out of school" programs while they are suspended. It is felt that alternatives must be provided to this approach to reduce the time young people are unsupervised and thus more vulnerable to violence.

Lack of access to shelter and housing

Lack of access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing was seen to be a contributor to violence, particularly in Labrador, where overcrowding and substandard housing is a significant issue in Aboriginal communities, as well as the lack of access to shelters.

In some regions across the province, there is no shelter for women experiencing violence. It was noted that women often remain in their abusive environments as their alternative is homelessness. All regions in which shelters are located are experiencing a tight housing market. When women who have accessed shelters need to transition out, they also face lack of housing options, in particular access to safe and affordable second stage housing. Low vacancy rates may result in landlords more readily refusing to rent to particular populations, which can include single women and their children escaping violence, as well as young people who are leaving their family homes due to concerns for their safety.

While it is recognized that NL Housing has a Victims of Violence Policy, there is often a wait list for this housing resulting in some victims returning to the abusive situations from which they

escaped and/or availing of unregulated slum boarding homes. Both of these "options" put the women at further risk of violence. Some shelters extend the length of stay for women who face a choice between homelessness and returning to their violent environment.

All shelters for women and their children experiencing violence need sufficient staffing to run a 24/7 operation and for double staffing, which increases safety for both shelter workers and clients.

In Labrador, housing concerns are magnified particularly in isolated coastal communities where women who are experiencing violence have no access to a shelter and/or other services which could support them. It was stated that the only alternative which regular users of the existing shelters in Labrador have is to go out of Labrador for housing/supports, which then disconnects the women from their traditional supports.

In Labrador, overcrowding also is a significant issue in Aboriginal communities. This can be a catalyst for violence with children and elders considered to be significantly at risk in these situations.

Several policy and program issues were identified for review based on the many and varied housing and homelessness issues in the province. These included more social housing for victims of violence, a need to incorporate boarding homes within the regulatory framework of the Residential Tenancies Act, and increase the availability of shelters and second stage/transitional housing throughout the province.

Information and access to services

A comprehensive communications plan is needed to inform the general public on their right to safety and on programs and services available to help those experiencing violence. It was felt that information should be available through a one-stop service approach, for example, a government based website and a 1-800 number (as not all are computer literate or have access to technology). Caution was expressed, however, that the 1-800 number should reach a person not an automated voice system, as the latter can be quite intimidating/confusing for some. Additionally, it was felt that websites must both engage and protect users.

Information on services must be up-to-date, respond to the needs of those with limited literacy and/or whose first language is not English and be available in a range of media (e.g., print, radio, online). Some expressed a need for any communications materials to identify the RCCs, their role in the continuum of services and how to contact them.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:

- Whenever and wherever possible, the Violence Prevention Initiative not only highlights the contact information for all ten RCCs, but the work they do in their regions as well i.e., news releases, websites, emergency contact cards, etc.]

Some participants highlighted the importance of supporting victims to navigate systems and services and access needed wrap around supports. It was noted that models to review for this case management approach included the St. John's ACT Team and the Aboriginal patient navigator model.

Labrador

A pervasive concern in Labrador is a general lack of resources and services to respond to the range and level of social and health needs that contribute to violence, particularly in relation to addictions, mental health and justice services. Participants from Labrador identified a number of key program and policy gaps, many of which mirror those identified elsewhere in this report but which are magnified due to isolation and cultural nuances.

There is a significant lack of support for perpetrators. It was felt there should be an increased focus on restorative justice models and as well a family violence court similar to that which exists in St. John's.

It was stated that too often individuals are "sent out" from Labrador to access services. It was felt this approach increases the likelihood that they would engage in at risk behaviour due to cultural challenges. As well it was noted that this approach also does not support individuals' reintegration on return to their communities.

Family violence in Labrador was said to result in high levels of incarceration for offenders. It was noted that it is a struggle to achieve an appropriate balance when imposing sentences with some participants stating stricter penalties might not address the violent behaviour. Some participants identified the need for remedial programs for those in conflict with the law.

The importance of having preventative programs and services available in Labrador also was highlighted. For example, it was stated that the incidence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and mental health issues are high in Labrador but there are few related diagnostic and supportive services. It was felt that this has led to increased numbers of Aboriginal people being incarcerated. Similarly, there is little support for those experiencing family violence despite the fact that suicide rates are high for children and adults experiencing family violence.

Drugs and alcohol are seen as significant catalysts for violence in Labrador – again with little focus on prevention. Participants cited a lack of onsite services such as a detox centre,

insufficient funding for relevant support services which leads to staff turnover, lack of continuity, and in general, a lack of responsive interventions by health care providers.

There is a need to engage Aboriginal people (youth and adults) in designing services which are responsive to their needs.

Department of Advanced Education and Skills

Some participants raised concerns with Income Support policies which they identify as increasing people's risk of experiencing violence. As an example it was noted that Income Support cheques often are addressed to the male partner in a household. If there is violence in the house, this creates a significant financial barrier to women needing to escape. Some also stated that a woman with limited financial means who is experiencing violence has to be literally homeless before she can access Income Support. Yet, if she is homeless without an address, she cannot access Income Support.

Department of Health and Community Services

Some participants stated that there are few services to address the growing numbers of people facing mental health and addictions issues. As an example, while the new youth mental health and addictions facilities being built in Grand Falls-Windsor and St. John's were lauded, it was noted that these will have limited capacity and cannot address the overarching provincial need. A concern also was raised that a lack of services means those who are experiencing mental health issues and come in conflict with the law tend to end up in the justice system when they need access to mental health services.

Another gap identified was the lack of programs and services to support those who are experiencing emotional and psychological abuse. In general it was felt that access to counselling services is severely limited with long waiting lists for Regional Health Authority services and few private practitioners in rural areas.

Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS)

A few participants expressed the view that the recent CYFS legislation does not sufficiently support struggling families. It was felt, for example, that there are insufficient staff to do interventions with families in crisis, lack of supports for parents with addictions and lack of counselling to support family reunification.

Some also stated that, despite recent policy changes in relation to foster families, there is insufficient focus on counselling the children in care or supporting families who are fostering children with difficult and/or violent behaviour.

It was felt that women who are escaping violence often are not provided easy or sufficient access to child care. This was considered to be a significant issue for those working in the evenings and overnight in an effort to achieve financial stability. Further, it was stated that childcare subsidies are below average.

A few participants highlighted that social workers and child protection workers need to better understand cultural nuances and practices and how these could increase the risk of violence against immigrant women and children.

Some noted it is important to ensure the new early childhood learning strategy, childcare strategy and CYFS legislation are approached as an overarching horizontal initiative to more effectively support children and families at risk of violence.

It also was highlighted by a few participants that while the duty to report is set out in the CYFS Act, there is much work to be done to educate the general public and front line workers on their roles and responsibilities in this regard.

Department of Justice

Many participants spoke to changes they feel are needed in the justice system to more effectively support victims. For example, there is only one Family Violence Court and one Mental Health Court and both are in St. John's. There are very few resources for sex offenders in the province and there is an insufficient focus on restorative justice.

The issue of Emergency Protection Orders (EPO) received significant discussion in a few of the roundtable discussions, with participants highlighting their concerns with the process:

- It is considered difficult to get an EPO;
- Securing a peace bond should be a component of the EPO so a victim does not have to go to court with the offender to make the case for having a bond granted;
- The EPO is valid for 30 – 90 days, yet it can take weeks to get through the court system to settle issues between the parties. Some felt the EPO should be a minimum of 90 days;
- There is a lack of training with requisite justice personnel on the EPO; and

- There needs to be a checklist developed for items to include in an EPO. It was noted that if a woman does not think of all the potential scenarios to include due to the stress she is under, this gives the perpetrator opportunities to further victimize her. For example, if it is not stated that a light bill has to be paid, this can lapse and the power can be cut.

Those experiencing psychological and verbal abuse were seen to be at a significant disadvantage in terms of accessing justice and supports. Some felt that police and the court appear to have no mandate or few options to address these crimes.

Aboriginal participants suggested a number of ways the justice system could be improved:

- Provide remedial programs for perpetrators of violence balanced with meaningful penalties;

- Assign a support person for those going to court;

- Reduce the delays in the court proceedings so that perpetrators are not waiting years to be held accountable;

- Improve access to legal counsel. The example was given of Court coming twice a year to Rigolet so opportunities for consultation with legal counsel happen just before court;

- Acknowledge and use the Gladue Courts in more Aboriginal communities (this court specializes in the treatment of Aboriginal offenders and operates on the premise that Aboriginal people face unique challenges);

- Use family group decision-making which was seen as offering much promise for Inuit communities in addressing violence as a shared responsibility. This process, which gathers individuals, families, community members and professionals together to see how they can provide support for those involved was seen as having merit for other social services such as CYFS and education; and

- Make businesses responsible for violence prevention (make it not possible to buy beer at night in isolated communities; make bar owners responsible for ensuring patrons can get home safely; do security searches of passengers on northern flights to mitigate the amount of alcohol being brought to communities).

Increasing programs and services

A few suggestions were provided for enhanced programming to support violence prevention.

There should be more empowerment programs available for women. A number of the shelter providers noted that the empowerment sessions they run for women are quite successful and are

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an important vehicle for providing women with the information and peer support they need. It was stated by a few participants that there should be funding made available to shelters to offer this as a core program. Peer mentorship programs are also needed to provide women support to move forward aided by other survivors who have gone before them.

There also should be more empowerment programs available for female youth. Topics which participants felt should be addressed included healthy relationships, self esteem, dating violence, and the legal implications of underage sex.

5.7   Supporting Aboriginal women and children

Key issues

In terms of the key violence prevention issues facing Aboriginal women and children who are victims of violence, perpetrators of violence and other vulnerable populations (such as elders, those with addictions and mental health issues), the key underlying issue is too many people seeking too few resources and supports, particularly in isolated coastal Labrador communities. More culturally relevant services for a variety of needs are required, as well as models to provide services and supports in isolated communities that lack professional and para-professional service providers. Currently, the Nunatsiavut Government is looking at having victims and reformed abusers serve as role models for their peers.

Among children the use of drugs and alcohol is escalating and leading to violent behaviours: "Kids do not know how to say no". They need money for their habits and this leads to fighting in rural and urban areas. The Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network held drug awareness sessions for grades seven and older but this need to be done in the lower grades. Concerns were expressed about the many dangerous substances being used to get high. As one participant stated, "The issue used to be smoking – who cares about that now?"

Another key priority identified is empowering and educating girls on healthy relationships and self-esteem, dating violence, the legal implications of underage sex and self defence. The Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network has developed and delivered workshops for girls with excellent feedback; parents want more of this type of initiative. The Nunatsiavut Government also had the NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre hold a workshop for them which was considered to be very good.

Labrador shelter representatives noted they see a lot of children being removed with no intervention and no meeting with parents. It was felt that the parents do not understand their rights. When children are removed the parents do not understand why they are removed or what

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their rights are. There is a need to focus on parenting skills. As well, foster families should actively be supporting parents to regain their parental rights.

It was felt that education for Aboriginal men and young boys is also needed. Examples given of effective programs focused on Aboriginals were the 'I am a Good Man' workshops (this needs further adaptation for the Inuit population) and the Courage Code program for boys ("The boys in Conne River did not want it to finish").

When Aboriginal individuals move to urban centres there are cultural challenges which make them vulnerable to drugs and alcohol. It was noted that this is occurring within a framework of insufficient supports.

Aboriginal Women's Violence Prevention Grants

These grants, provided by the Provincial Government through the WPO, are well appreciated. Participants shared information on a number of good projects aimed at awareness and education. The sense is that these are having an impact as there is an increased demand for initiatives. Participants said some project activities have been continued by organizations once their initial grants were concluded (e.g.,, once a workshop has been developed). Raising the funding from $10,000 to $30,000 was seen as making a significant difference. This amount enables groups to hire a person to deliver the project. It was noted that this is the only dedicated money the Nunatsiavut Women's Policy Coordinator has for programs and it is of significant help.

There were a few suggestions for improvements to the grants. It would be good to have the funding for longer or to get approvals earlier in the fiscal year. When grant approvals are received in the winter (which is often the case) it is difficult to finish the project by the end of the fiscal year. Multi-year funding would help too (i.e., ability to carryover funds if the project is not completed).

6.0 Perspectives on "*the focus on inequality as the root cause of violence*" being the right approach for the VPI

Overall, the majority of participants agreed that inequality is the root cause of violence. Some participants felt that it is not the only factor to consider. Many participants suggested that the "imbalance of control and power" as the root cause of violence were terms that the public would more readily understand. The specific views raised in the discussions are set out below.

The term inequality came from the women's movement based on the evidence on the causes of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. Some participants now view the term as too limiting as other forms of violence are perceived to be a result of other, more immediate factors.

For example, participants in the Aboriginal round table felt that trauma and addictions are main causes of violence being committed by both women and men in their communities – and that this is an inter-generational issue rooted in the relocations that occurred in the 1950s in Labrador and the residential schools. While these root causes were recognized by participants as a result of inequality of Aboriginal people with the Europeans who settled in their communities and government decision-makers, today the population does not readily understand this.

Some participants felt that children are getting the anti-bullying message but they do not see this as violence, much less violence based on inequality. It was also felt that in communicating this message there are generational considerations. Older generations do not necessarily see that women should be equal so how do we ensure the message reaches them?

Inequality may also connote that violence does not happen to people within the same social class or ethnic group when it does.

Some participants felt that focusing on inequality dances around the subject. The focus should be on equality and the actions needed within the broad community to show respect for others.

Generally, participants felt that 'control and power' were terms that would be more readily understood, especially if there is messaging around the different forms of power and control and how these impact on violence against various vulnerable groups and in different contexts: those who bully or are bullied, women, older persons who experience various forms of violence by family members and care givers, and Aboriginal people.

Still, there was a concern expressed by many participants that moving too far away from inequality as a root cause of violence would create a disconnect between women and violence; the key message would be inappropriately degenderized.

Some participants made the observation that violence is a learned behaviour from the media, role models and peers, and is adopted as normal. This has to be an underlying consideration in any awareness or education program.

7.0 Perspectives on maintaining "a focus on preventing violence against those who are most vulnerable in the province"

Most round tables agreed there should be a continued focus on the current target populations. In most cases the discussion focused on adding new groups or sub-groups. Some participants felt that a more holistic or general broadening of the messaging is needed to communicate that violence affects all and all may be perpetrators of violence, but also ensuring attention to the vulnerable groups.

Some participants suggested specific, additional groups that should be targeted in VPI activities and social marketing campaigns including:

- Young boys;

- Gender minority groups (LGBT) need to be set out as a group separate from the 'persons of differing sexual orientations' group; lesbian, bisexual and gay individuals need a different focus than transgender individuals;

- People with body image/eating disorders;

- People with addictions;

- People with mental health issues and complex needs;

- People from religious / spiritual minorities;

- Francophone minorities; and

- Men from two dimensions: men who are vulnerable to violence (some of whom may now be a sub-group of the current target groups); and men who are at risk of or who are perpetrating violence and who need remedial treatment and supports. Also men should be included as a partner group in RCC and WPO initiatives.

  [The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:

  o Reported police statistics, both provincially and federally, show that women are more likely to be victims of violence than men. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that RCC and WPO initiatives focus on women; and

  o Women in Newfoundland and Labrador experience physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual and cultural violence, as well as verbal and financial abuse and neglect. According to RNC and RCMP data, from 2006 to 2010 over 14,000 violent incidents were committed against women over the age of 18 in our

province. This data will be incorporated in the new six-year Violence Prevention Initiative plan of action.]

Also it was noted that preventing violence in the workplace should be added as a target issue.

In regard to addressing violence for these additional groups, participants generally referenced the approaches discussed in relation to the VPI's awareness and education activities for individuals in the target populations, the general public and service providers. Several participants did note that using the social media (and other venues) to reach youth should be a key approach in future.

Several participants referenced the need to focus on racism against multicultural and Aboriginal groups and individuals. The challenge cited was how to highlight the issues of abuse for a range of cultures without perpetuating the stereotype that it is just "them." There is a need to address racial biases and the underlying cultural norms in order to find solutions for women and children in these populations. There is a need for a strong philosophy of multiculturalism within the province and its programs. It was also noted that education has to happen within these multicultural communities as well. They have to be open to being members of the community.

It is important to note that some participants recognized that broadening the groups would be a challenge given finite resources and the possibility of fragmenting the messaging. Some participants felt that taking a broader view of violence as a societal issue affecting everyone and then communicating the factors influencing violence was the right approach to addressing the current 'inter-locking system of oppression.' For example, take the Respect Women campaign and broaden this to Respect People.

8.0 Moving Forward

8.1 Key outcomes expected at the end of next Action Plan

The following were the specific outcomes that participants in the round tables want to see at the end of the next action plan.

Impacts

Overall, participants felt that that there should be an improvement over the baseline reported in the *Provincial Survey of Attitudes Towards Violence and Abuse.* They want to see evidence that there is an increased awareness of violence and its various forms.

Some participants expressed that they want to see more evidence of how different populations experience violence, and more community engagement and capacity to respond to violence and support victims. Tangible examples cited included bystanders taking action on bullying and other incidents of violence, and people speaking out about violence and not being afraid to call it what it is. A desire to see evidence that people recognize they are worthy of respect and that no one should experience violence were also cited as key outcomes.

Some participants would also like to see safe and healthy communities and safer schools. This would include more early interventions for "at risk" youth as opposed to suspensions for misbehavior, tools and resources for teachers, and awareness among young people of what constitutes violence and the negative implications of social media.

Service Capacity

Many participants indicated they would like to see more services and supports (e.g., housing, 911 across the province) available for victims of violence, with remote communities being specifically referenced. They felt there should be a mechanism for supporting victims to navigate through the available supports and services. It also was noted that an increase in referrals for service would demonstrate that violence is less hidden and more people are getting help.

Partnerships

Participants generally felt that a key outcome would be increased collaborative activity between and among existing VPI stakeholder groups, and inclusion of a broader group for ideas and support. As well, they said other key organizations (e.g., faith-based communities) with a vested interest in the issue hold seats on the RCCs.

Some participants wanted to see closer working relationships between government and community, which could be evidenced in practical ways, e.g., government providing community groups with free video-conferencing and/or website updating. A few participants voiced a desire to see an enhanced provincial Victim Services Program.

Participants generally agreed they would like to see everyone engaged in the VPI having a shared vision, realistic objectives and timelines, and a more formalized way of working.

8.2 Innovative approaches which should be considered in violence prevention

Participants raised a number of ideas they considered to be innovative approaches that could be adopted in the next VPI plan.

Engaging children and youth

One suggestion was to engage children and youth by tapping into the way they see and use the world, i.e., through technology. Participants felt that the VPI should explore how best to use social media (e.g., pop-ups, You Tube, listservs, conversation cafes) to host advertisements, provide information, deliver programs about violence and violence prevention, and create new ways of working together.

It was suggested that youth be engaged to provide peer training for children and other youth as it was felt they would be seen to be more "in tune" than the adults.

It was further suggested that future VPI campaigns could engage school children in designing the campaign. For example students in individual schools could work together to develop a generic quote and posters. It was felt by some that it was important to find other innovative ideas for students' education and involvement to give them ownership of the activity to increase their interest and "buy in."

The idea was raised of building on the positives of Aboriginal culture in how they treat 'differences' compared to western culture (i.e., they do not make a distinction for LGBT individuals). VPI might try to incorporate Aboriginal approaches like two-spirit to promote acceptance in the western approach for mental health, trauma and LGBT individuals.

Community awareness

Participants suggested several activities they felt were innovative and could be undertaken by community groups and RCCs. These included:

- Having a VPI stamp made for use on Public Service mail;

- Partnering with retail services (e.g., Tim Horton's) in an annual event (e.g., day of purple donuts);

- Holding a *Stand Up for Violence Prevention for Women Day* with people wearing purple and mirrored on Stand Up for Bullying Day;

- Holding a competition to design holiday cards for the Premier based on a "peace" theme; and

- Designing a flag to be flown during violence prevention week/month.

One-stop service

One participant suggested there be a regional "centre for violence prevention". This centre would house VPI-related services and supports and serve as a satellite site to tap into resources, provide funding for training, sustain relationships and ensure a consistent message across the province.

RCCs

To engage members, it was felt that RCCs should ensure members see the benefits for them, make the best use of their time and resources, and identify their expectations. For example, in Labrador the RCMP cannot come to all meetings but use their plane for shipping things to coastal communities, takes things into local schools as it helps with their mandate. In short, RCCs need to be user friendly and make it easy to be involved with their input valued.

Distance technology

VPI Labrador used an online video conferencing system to host Conversation Cafes to bring communities together (and groups within communities) to attend a professional development session with a US expert on violence prevention. More are planned. Access to this system is not costly ($800 fee per year for unlimited sites). The Provincial Government could provide onsite access to video conferencing equipment, as the Department of Education did this year for this initiative. The spin-off benefit was that individuals in small communities got together and formed local connections while also accessing this expertise at no cost.

9.0 Overall Considerations for Phase II of the VPI

This section sets out key considerations developed by the consultants based on a review of the input from the round table consultations.

Leadership

As part of the multi-year VPI Action Plan, the Provincial Government should make an annual public recommitment to the Initiative. It is anticipated this public statement would contribute to

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enhanced engagement in the VPI by current partners/stakeholders and potentially open doors for positive engagement by a broader stakeholder group, including members of the general public.

There is a need to highlight for the partner departments the many and varied issues, as well as policy and program gaps which are seen to be perpetuating violence across the province. This is of particular concern to Aboriginal people in Labrador and more remote areas of the province, where there are significant gaps in programs and services which would address the precipitating factors of violence. Further, attention must be paid to ensuring cultural sensitivities in addressing these program and service gaps.

More leadership is required from partner departments in conveying the importance and relevance of the VPI to departmental staff at head office and in the regions. Further, there must be more communication between the partner departments' regional offices and stakeholders on their individual violence prevention activities and initiatives, and enhanced collaboration on joint activities.

Stakeholders should be more engaged in the VPI planning processes, particularly the development of campaign information, training materials and other tools. The VPI should delineate a process to enable this collaborative effort, which would provide for maximum input (e.g., on design and how to roll out specific initiatives) while maintaining efficiency and timeliness of the relevant development and implementation processes.

There is a need for enhanced communication between the VPI Secretariat and the RCCs, partners and stakeholders. The VPI Secretariat should develop a communications plan which would identify ways and means of ensuring regular and clear communication (e.g., teleconferences, face-to-face meetings, conferences) with each of these groups, including expectations for information to be shared and discussed. As a critical component in this communications plan, the CAC meetings should be held regularly. The mandate and membership of the CAC should be reviewed and refined to include clear core focus on information sharing between and among community and government representatives.

There should be an accountability framework developed for the VPI which would have specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused and time bound (SMART) goals. These goals should be complementary to those of the VPI partner departments and more broadly of government. A critical component would be delineation of data collection and reporting processes, with a baseline defined and indicators against which to measure progress. Once this framework is established, the VPI Secretariat should work with the RCCs to identify their responsibility within this framework in particular as it relates to data collection and reporting.
[The Violence Prevention Initiative offers the following context to the above statement:

- As per Provincial Government protocol, the Violence Prevention Initiative currently has a working accountability framework;
- The Violence Prevention Initiative currently and consistently measures progress through the utilization of SMART goals.]

The RCCs should be accountable to the VPI Secretariat for engaging in activities which support the provincial VPI campaigns and activities and working collaboratively with partner/stakeholder organizations/affiliates and partner departments in their regions.

Approach

Violence prevention should be a focus across the lifespan of citizens from prenatal up to and including older persons. In the face of limited resources the VPI should have a significant prevention focus on families and young children in an effort to shape children's attitudes, beliefs and understanding about violence from a young age.

The focus on inequality as a root cause of violence is correct. Expansion and clarification of this message to include terminology around the imbalance of control and power as root causes of violence and abuse will contribute to public understanding and awareness. Clear, plain language explanations of how this imbalance leads to violence for various groups should be included in the messaging.

The VPI should maintain its focus on its current target vulnerable populations as these are the groups who experience the most violence in the province. The VPI might want to consider expanding the list based on the additional groups suggested by some round table participants, such as the LGBT population.

Additionally, and in an effort to capture a range of other populations whose circumstances and situations can render them at any point in time vulnerable to violence, the VPI should consider developing a "community-focused" campaign. This would have as its core message that violence prevention is "everyone's responsibility' and can impact anyone; it is a societal issue which demands the actions of all individual citizens and the community as a whole.

Marketing and Awareness

The VPI and RCCs should collaborate on rebranding the VPI and the RCCs as part of the VPI to create more recognition of this as a province-wide initiative with partners at all levels. We have taken our lead for this from the Labrador RCC.

Our suggestion is to rename the VPI as Violence Prevention Newfoundland Labrador (Violence Prevention NL).

Then to rename each RCC as a regional component: Violence Prevention Labrador; Violence Prevention Northern; Violence Prevention Western, etc. this would send a message of a cohesive provincial partnership.

New initiatives

The social media is seen as a significant contributing factor to violence in particular bullying/cyber bullying. It is considered by many to be an intimidating and frightening area given its complexity, rapid evolution and immediate impacts on youth. The VPI should play a leadership role in collaborating with stakeholders to identify how to address the negative impacts of social media.

Despite the negativity surrounding social media, it also provides an opportunity for the VPI as a venue for informing children and youth about the many and varied forms of violence and at risk online behaviour, and how to prevent/address violent behaviour. The VPI should identify opportunities to capitalize on the available social media in its campaigns and initiatives, particularly those that target youth.

Concluding thoughts

The opinions expressed in the round tables indicate there is significant agreement that the VPI is a valuable and successful initiative that should be continued, with enhancements designed to strengthen its presence in the province, its regional capacity for violence prevention and its achievement of outcomes.

It must build on its core and proven elements (e.g.,, social marketing campaigns) and strengthen the engagement of its partner departments and community stakeholders in both provincial and regional efforts.

Appendix A – List of organizations that participated in round tables or made written submissions

Regional Coordinating Committees Against Violence
- Violence Prevention Labrador
- Northern Committee Against Violence
- Western Regional Coalition to End Violence
- Southwestern Coalition to End Violence
- Central West Committee Against Violence Inc.
- The Roads to End Violence
- Eastern Region Committee Against Violence
- Burin Peninsula Voice Against Violence
- Communities Against Violence
- Coalition Against Violence

Provincial partner organizations
- Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador

Aboriginal governments and organizations
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Miawpukek First Nation
- Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation
- Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network
- St. John's Native Friendship Centre

Community stakeholders
- Association for New Canadians
- Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Canadian Red Cross
- Independent Living Resource Centre
- Thrive/Community Youth Network

Women's Centres[2]
- St. John's
- Stephenville

Transition Houses (THANL)[3]
- Iris Kirby House (St John's)
- O'Shaughnessy House (Carbonear)
- Grace Sparkes House (Marystown)
- Cara Transition House (Gander)
- Hope Haven (Labrador City)
- Libra House (Happy Valley- Goose Bay)
- Kirkina House (Rigolet)

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[2] In addition, some Women's Centres who were members of the RCCs attended the round table meetings in their regions.
[3] In addition, some shelters who were members of the RCCs attended the round table meetings in their regions.