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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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PRELIMINARY
SPOUSAL
ASSAULT REPORT

REPORT BY
THE TASK FORCE ON SPOUSAL ASSAULT

PREPARED FOR:

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THIS REPORT IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
DOROTHY, ROBERTA AND AGNES
FOR WHOM ITS RECOMMENDATIONS CAME TOO LATE AND
TO THE MANY OTHERS FOR WHOM WE HOPE THAT IT IS NOT.

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Spousal assault in the Northwest Territories is a social problem of grave proportions. Some assaults result in permanent injury or death to victims. Others lead to suicide. Still others result in less serious injuries but cause trauma and irreparable harm to victims, their families and communities.

Wives, husbands and lovers have their eyes blackened, their teeth knocked out, their ribs and legs broken, their bodies bruised and blackened and their lives disfigured by violence as a result of assaults which occur daily in the Northwest Territories. For many victims, beatings are regular and frequent. Living in fear, with their health deteriorating, their self-esteem destroyed, their faces permanently disfigured, they live among us, hiding their injuries, their shame and their pain as well as they are able.

Others share their shame and humiliation though they are not necessarily victims themselves. Elders, especially older women see these beatings as assaults not only on their daughters and granddaughters, but also on the extended families and on the ways of life they have tried to pass on. Some see their own brutality and victimization being relived in their children's and grandchildren's lives. Others see children whom they raised in loving and peaceful households being brutalized by their spouses.

Some of the people who have suffered or who have watched the suffering of others in silence for too long came to the Task Force and began to unfold their terrible tales. A few came out in the beginning, but as the word spread from place to place that a serious attempt was being made to assess the problems of spousal assault and to look for solutions, more came forward to assist us. Not only victims and witnesses of violence came forward, but in small numbers so did batterers.

People have found the courage to discuss spousal assault. The Task Force must ensure, through its report and recommendations, that this discussion and the search for solutions continues.

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The Task Force on Spousal Assault was set up to examine the nature and extent of spousal assault in the Northwest Territories. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Executive Committee of which he is a member wanted to know the nature and effectiveness of government agency responses and to receive recommendations on how existing budgets and personnel might be more effectively used. They also wanted to learn what new measures might be undertaken to deal with the problems battered spouses and their families cannot cope with alone and for which little or no public assistance is available at present.

The Task Force on Spousal Assault was asked to help raise the public awareness of spousal assault across the Territories. We have contributed to this. At the same time, we wish to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that citizens' committees on family violence and alcoholism have been forming in various communities across the Northwest Territories and are themselves raising the public awareness of the problem in ways we cannot.

Iris McCracken and I travelled extensively in the Nunavut and Western regions of the Northwest Territories. We were accompanied by and assisted with some of the community visits by other Task Force members.

Of necessity the Task Force's review of the spousal assault problem in the Northwest Territories was a general one. We uncovered much but we believe far more escaped our notice and was not brought to our attention. Nevertheless, we are confident we have surveyed and sampled the spousal assault situation in a number of representative communities. We were fortunate to have on our Task Force women from a variety of communities who represented a cross section of northern cultural backgrounds. They provided an introduction into communities we might not have had otherwise.

We on the Task Force are grateful for and humbled by the dedication and courage of those who came forward to give us their recommendations and to relate to us their experiences. Many of these people had to overcome their fears, their embarrassment and their shame to tell us their stories, to express their hopes and fears for the future. Many of our recommendations are directly from them and all are dedicated to them in the hopes that we, as members of northern society and as residents of the Northwest Territories can deal more positively and more successfully with the problems, tragedies and consequences of spousal assault.

John U. Bayly
Chairman,
Task Force on Spousal Assault
February 19th, 1985.

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INTRODUCTION

People in the Northwest Territories are aware that violent crime is a growing problem in many of their communities. Increased alcohol and drug abuse have been accompanied by violence even in remote northern villages. But many northern people face an even more alarming reality. The crimes they fear occur in their own homes. Many northern people are the victims of spousal assault. Those who assault and batter them are the husbands, wives and lovers. The violence inflicted upon these victims is witnessed by their children. The lessons this violence teaches ensures that the legacies of violence are passed on and will be endured and suffered in our childrens' and grandchildrens' generations.

Spousal assault strikes at the heart of family and community life. It reaches every part of our society. Many of those who assault and batter were raised in families where spousal assault has taken place. Many of them were themselves abused as children. Many victims of spousal assault saw their mothers beaten by their fathers. Some have grown up to believe that being abused is part of a woman's fate.

Where spousal assault occurs in the Northwest Territories, the woman is more often the victim. There are however, men who suffer from physical and mental assaults inflicted upon them by wives and lovers. In addition to the pain and anguish, these carry an additional burden of embarrassment, for the battered spouse is often the object of ridicule.

Spousal assault can be compared to few other crimes. Its causes are not readily apparent. They are often deeply rooted in the history of the family and its members. The solutions are equally complex. Victims seldom seek the protection and the sanctions which the police and the courts are expected to provide. When they do, complainants are caught up in the complex emotions of fear, love, guilt, loyalty and shame.

The justice system is arranged to serve those who have been wronged by people outside their own households. It responds less effectively to the needs of those who have been harmed by their wives, husbands and lovers.

Although many Northwest Territories communities are small and intimate, most victims feel isolated. They are often reluctant to turn to friends or family members. Those close to them are often aware of what is going on but hesitate to interfere in personal and private family matters.

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Where mediation and counselling may in the past have been undertaken by mature and respected community members including elders and chiefs, northern society is changing. Those responsibilities are now assumed to be the prerogative of the social service agencies. Those agencies, particularly in the smaller communities, do not have trained counsellors on staff. Even where a social worker has counselling abilities, there are often so many other social welfare duties that effective counselling is impossible.

Reporting spousal assault to the authorities carries its own attendant risks. Sometimes when police attend and to avoid further disturbance, the victim not the batterer is removed from the family residence.

Helping agencies have their defined areas of responsibility. For example, doctors and nurses treat the cuts and bruises and broken bones. Without clearly outlined protocols they seldom independently report assaults to the police. Referrals to social workers are rare.

To victims, the judicial system seems as concerned about the batterer as they are about the victim. Indeed, the batterer is better protected and defended in the courtroom.

Whatever action the courts can take, community attitudes remain important. In many Northwest Territories settlements there remains an attitude that spousal assault is not a community problem and that the spousal assault that occurs behind closed doors can be ignored, condoned and, in uncommon instances, even encouraged. On the other hand, some community institutions such as alcohol committees, settlement, hamlet, band and regional councils and native organizations made public statements condemning spousal assault as unacceptable.

For too long the victims of spousal assault and their families have suffered in silence and isolation. This must not be allowed to continue. We must encourage victims to seek help and when they do, we must be prepared to provide it. Similarly, we must develop methods to deal with the problems of batterers. We must be prepared to do more than impose criminal sanctions through the courts. We must reach out to them with counselling, therapy and family life education.

Not only did we meet with the RCMP, nurses, social workers, prosecutors and judges, but they provided generously of their experiences in responses to a questionnaire we provided. Institutional response by police, social workers, health workers and others is important. However, institutional response must be coordinated with community response to the problems. Few indigenous northern people leave their home communities for lengthy periods. Many marry or form relationships with men and women from their own community or their own region. Spousal assault is not only learned by children from their parents but it affects their abilities to learn in the schools. Principals and teachers across the north told us that they could

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recognize many of the children whose lives were disturbed by violence in their own homes. Their difficulties in learning absorb the time and energies of teachers in the school and affect other students in the class.

The Task Force realized that public attention must continually be returned to spousal assault so that community and government resources can together begin to deal with it. We must use the media to which we have been provided such generous access to keep the problem before us, to discourage and censure spousal assault, to encourage family values and practices which will strengthen northern peoples and their communities.

Our study is not complete and, even where we were able to visit communities for several days, we cannot claim that in any of them our inquiries were exhaustive. Our work was not intended to complete the task or uncover every spousal assault problem and situation. We are fully aware that continued study and immediate action are urgently needed. Our report is a survey, not an analysis of the problems. The Task Force urges northern society and governments to take up the challenges posed in our recommendations, work and experiment with them. The public debate about spousal assault must continue. We must keep open minds regarding solutions and we must respond to community initiatives and good ideas wherever possible.

Chapter 1

SPOUSAL ASSAULT IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

1 DEFINITION

The Task Force has selected a definition of spousal assault which combines the perceptions of a cross-section of northern people. It is a definition we believe to be precise and broad enough to cover physical and mental abuse.

"spousal assault is violence, both physical and psychological, expressed by a husband, wife or lover towards his or her mate. It is directly or indirectly condoned by the traditions, laws and attitudes prevalent in the society in which it occurs."

There is growing awareness that there exists a spousal assault syndrome. Victims, batterers, observers and professionals gave us their opinions that spousal assault is learned behaviour, that it is passed from one generation to another by example and that children who witness spousal assault between their parents are more likely to become batterers and victims than they would if they were raised in homes free from violence.

Most men and women who batter will say sincerely that they love their wives, husbands and lovers. Batterers often tend to be traditional in their attitudes about male and female roles. Violence is often used as a controlling and disciplinary means to secure the victim in the relationship. Batterers often cut their victims off from family members and friends of both sexes. They erode and break down any self confidence victims may have and are repeatedly critical in their assessment of the victims' ability to perform even the simplest of domestic tasks.

In many cases violence occurs when the batterer is under the influence of alcohol. Whether or not it is a cause of violence is a subject of debate and controversy.

Spousal assault is deliberate and usually secretive. Even where the batterer may be under the influence of alcohol, sometimes care is taken to inflict pain and injury in such a way and in such places that it can be

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hidden by sunglasses or covered with clothing. Spousal assault often takes place in the family home away from the prying eyes of neighbours or strangers.

Victims have, or develop, low self-esteem. They are often ashamed of being beaten and are unwilling to disclose the fact to intimate friends and family members and will often go to great lengths to disguise or cover up the evidence of beatings or to lie about the causes. As one writer, a battered wife herself, wrote recently:

"There are different ways to be battered, different styles that can be used to make another person feel shamed, humiliated, and worthless. Battering can be physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual. Or any combination of those. The silent treatment, being ignored, as if you weren't there, not a person at all, can be pretty devastating. The putdowns -- nothing you do is right. Nothing you do is good enough and neither are you. So you wear yourself out, trying harder. But nothing works. And you are reminded over and over. You try to hang in there, try to understand. Be patient. He is a good man. He is confused, having a hard time. He'll get over it. Some do. And some don't."

Laraque, M.H., Surviving the pains of battering,
NATIVE PRESS, February 8th, 1985, pg. 5

Spousal assault is not just a problem for victims and their children. Spousal assault is also a problem for batterers who have problems which may, if faced and treated, be dealt with. Solutions which seek no more than greater punishment for batterers avoid the issue that batterers, in spite of punishment, often continue to batter the same victim or new victims. Spousal assault is not just a problem for victims, batterers and their families. The next generation of batterers and victims is well on the way to being taught and conditioned to inflict and bear the miseries of spousal assault.

1.2 A DESCRIPTION

Spousal assault in the Northwest Territories is not a new problem. Since the earliest days of contact between European and natives peoples and indeed in pre contact times, instances of wife and even husband abuse have come down to us in the written and oral histories of the aboriginal peoples of the north.

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Native people across the north told us that although it was far less frequent than in modern times, spousal assault did take place in their cultures in the past. Some instances, apparently motivated by perceived need to chastise a lazy mate, were condoned to the extent that they did not give rise to action by the group or community. Others, perhaps because the beatings were more severe or administered more openly for less acceptable reasons, caused both criticism and group action.

Spousal assault was not encouraged and under some circumstances, the offender was severely disciplined and sometimes threatened with banishment.

One Dene woman told the Task Force that spousal assault is not an accepted part of cultural behaviour amongst her Chipewyan people, nor amongst the Slavey people with whom she works. The Task Force was told by several native people that in native society, people are much less openly critical of one another and much less likely to intervene.

If spousal assault has a lengthy history in northern native cultures, it is also deeply rooted in the diverse origins of non-native Canadian society. Whalers, explorers, fur traders and others came to the north without their women. Many took wives from amongst the native women, either for brief periods of time or, in some cases, remained, married and adopted their culture. In more recent times, non-natives have brought their wives and families into northern Canada where they have in large numbers established their homes and households.

Spousal assault is by no means a native phenomenon in the north. While non-native Canadians in the Northwest Territories may not share common ancestry, in most of their histories the assumptions were that men had dominion over their wives, that women were expected to obey their husbands and that the wife's place was in the home. Spousal assault is part of the background of non-native societies as well.

In spite of the scarcity of open criticism of spousal assault, in virtually every community there is evidence of support for victims and their children in the provision of food, shelter and comfort. Such support is given by friends and relatives and concerned members of the community.

Many expressed concern that in more recent times they had sometimes risked danger and unpleasant confrontations when they had to deal with angry, intoxicated or violent batterers. Some people for these reasons have become more reluctant to open freely their doors to victims and their children.

Victims are aware of the inconvenience and danger to those in whose homes they must seek refuge. Often they run to houses already cramped and to family members too poor to help without themselves suffering. This,

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coupled with shame and embarrassment, keeps many victims in their own homes, suffering alone and in isolation.

The concern to keep families and communities together appears to keep many victims from making complaints, from seeking help, from leaving. Parents and grandparents encourage victims to stay with or return to their spouses for the sake of the children and extended family. Christian values are often strong, and where couples have been married, the victim is often reminded of solemn promises made before God and man.

Although native and non-native peoples in the Northwest Territories may share similar beliefs and expectations of the roles of men and women in interspousal relationships, the situation of non-native victims is often quite different from that of native victims. On the one hand, it may be easier for a non-native victim with roots in other places and without the pressures of community and family to leave a battering situation and seek refuge in a neighbour's home, a shelter in a northern community or by returning home to friends and family.

On the other hand, many non-native victims do not have a network of support upon which they can rely in the community. In addition to being cut off from others as the victims often are, they are often burdened with young children, lack of funds and ignorant of where to go for assistance.

Initiatives to assist victims and their families and batterers must take into account that, although there are overlapping similarities amongst the native and non-native peoples of the Northwest Territories, there are also differences which must be accommodated.

There is a common thread running through the problems associated with spousal assault, whether it occurs in Yellowknife or Gjoa Haven or Clyde River. However, solutions which may work in larger communities may not be so easily transferrable to small native communities. At the same time, there may be small in those communities because of the closely knit family and cultural ties which will give rise to solutions which might be unworkable in larger more fragmented communities.

1.2.1 MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

Members of the Task Force have visited more than 30 communities in the Northwest Territories. In none of them could anyone with confidence tell us how many victims there were or the frequency of spousal assault. The RCMP have recently begun to keep statistics which can tell us how many incidents resulted in charges taken before the courts. A few months ago, the crown attorneys began to keep records of spousal assault cases in which charges did not proceed in the courts.

Professionals and others in the communities provided estimates of

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incidents from their experiences and observations. Most professionals said very few incidents were reported to them. However, others in the communities, speaking confidentially to the Task Force admitted that there was a lot of unreported spousal assault.

If numbers are important to those who must decide where and how to spend scarce financial resources and where to place trained professionals, more comprehensive information must be kept and turned over to statisticians for analysis. Even then, because of the reluctance of many victims to disclose the full extent of their problems or the real reasons for their distress and injuries, the statistics cannot be relied upon to give an accurate account of the extent of spousal assault.

The indicators of spousal assault suggest to us that it is a problem of serious proportions although the incidence varies from community to community. There are people who told the Task Force that spousal assault is increasing. We believe it is increasing, but there are so few statistics. People's willingness to talk about spousal assault is increasing. That by itself might leave the impression that there is more spousal assault than there was approximately a decade ago.

The Task Force believes that the incidence of family violence is frequent enough to be very serious. There are changes happening in northern society which seem to have an effect on spousal assault. Changes in traditional family structures, the emergence of the woman as family provider, increases in unemployment, particularly among men, and the introduction of new values which are in apparent conflict with old values are all put forward as things which influence spousal assault patterns and frequencies. The influence of television, video films and pornographic publications which show violence is difficult to assess, but the Task Force believes it is significant, particularly in shaping attitudes of young people.

1.3 PAST AND PRESENT INITIATIVES

The problems of spousal assault had been of serious concern for some time before the Task Force was set up. In the Northwest Territories, the Territorial Government had already commissioned a Victims Needs Assessment Study, which was completed by Susan L. Green in February 1983 (ref. Green, Susan L., An analysis of victims' needs in the Northwest Territories, victims' needs assessment study, February 1983). That study included a chapter on wife battering.

A number of groups including the Native Women's Association, the Society Against Family Abuse, the Inuit Women's Association, the YWCA, the Salvation Army, the Yellowknife Women's Support Group, the Yellowknife

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Transition Committee, the Baffin Womens' Association, the Yellowknife Family Counselling Services, the Native Court Workers, Maliganik Tukisiiniakvik and the Delta House and others have been attempting to draw public attention to wife battering and to start programs and to find shelter for those in need.

In addition to these initiatives, many native women have developed ad hoc methods of protection services through their churches, sewing and other groups, or informally among themselves. Many families have sheltered victims in their homes on a regular basis. The Sappujjijit Friendship Centre in Rankin Inlet is providing shelter and counselling as is the Katikmavik Centre in Cambridge Bay which has set aside living quarters for victims in addition to providing follow up counselling services to the abuser as well as to the victim.

A crisis centre at Fort Smith had been providing shelter to battered spouses and their families for a number of years. RCMP, nurses and social workers have been providing shelter, comfort, necessities and counselling often under difficult circumstances. The clergy, friends, relatives and neighbours have done the same as long as people can remember, in spite of overcrowding in their own homes and risks of danger to themselves and to their families.

Community meetings on family violence and spousal assault took place before and have continued to take place since we began our inquiries. Several community initiatives had begun when we visited some of the settlements.

Newspaper and magazine articles, radio talk shows and television specials have assisted us wherever we have gone and have extended our presence into places we could not go. Newspapers, publishing in native languages and in English have been most generous and cooperative in assisting the Task Force to achieve one of its main goals - to stimulate community awareness.

The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation and CBC have assisted the Task Force through interviews, panel discussion shows, phone in programs and news reports. Community radio stations played a major role in announcing upcoming public meetings in communities visited by the Task Force.

In several communities on community radio, local people conducted phone in programs with Task Force members as resource people. The willingness of the local people to participate and the responses indicated a desire to discuss the problem and the deep concern of the people in the community.

There is in the Northwest Territories an awakening to the realization that spousal assault is a community problem. There is a willingness by people to confront and discuss this problem in a frank and open way. Some of these people are anguished family members and concerned neighbours. Others are victims and batterers. This willingness to openly discuss

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spousal assault is most encouraging and necessary.

Chapter 2

ROLE OF THE TASK FORCE

1 THE TASK FORCE AND ITS MANDATE

In early May 1984, the Executive Committee of the Government of the Northwest Territories approved the appointment of a task force on spousal assault in the Northwest Territories. The Task Force was to be made up of five members representing a cross section of northern peoples and experiences. Later two additional members were appointed to assist the Task Force in gathering information from the public in particular geographical areas. The members of the Task Force are:

- John U. Bayly, Chairman, Yellowknife
- Iris McCracken, Member, Frobisher Bay
- Margaret Vandell, Member, Fort Providence
- Lena Kikoak, Member, Tuktoyaktuk
- Geela Giroux, Member, Frobisher Bay
- Bertha Allen, Member, Inuvik
- Mary Jane Goulet, Member, Yellowknife

The Task Force reports to the Ministerial Committee on Spousal Assault and through them, to the Minister responsible for the status of women, Dennis Patterson. The Ministerial Committee on Spousal Assault is made up of senior public servants in Health and Welfare Canada, the Yellowknife Transition House Committee, the federal Ministry of Justice, the Yellowknife Family Counselling Services, the Government of the Northwest Territories Departments of Social Services, of Health, and of Justice and Public Services, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Meetings have also been attended by a judge of the Territorial Court of the Northwest Territories. This Committee has been coordinated by the Executive Director of the Advisory

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Council on the Status on Women which is responsible to Mr. Patterson. The Advisory Council also provided services and assistance to the Task Force throughout the period of its investigations and during the course of the writing of this report.

The purpose of the Task Force was to travel throughout the Northwest Territories making contact with and discussing spousal assault with residents and representatives in several communities throughout the Territories as well as consulting with the professional agency representatives who deliver government services and protection throughout the Northwest Territories and to make a final report with recommendations.

2.2 THE TASK

The Task Force was instructed to choose and visit communities in the Northwest Territories and to make contact with and request information and opinions from social workers, health care workers, teachers, legal service centres, lawyers and judges nurses and doctors, officers and members of the RCMP, native court workers, representatives of local, regional and territorial native organizations, local community groups and individuals. The Task Force was to seek out victims and the families and friends of victims to discuss with them their experiences and the availability of comfort, refuge, protection and counselling.

The Task Force was also instructed to enlist the help of the media, the telephone and to request taped and written submissions. The Task Force was advised to seek the cooperation of women's groups and to attend and to take advantage of the gathering of professionals and others at regional and territorial meetings.

It was envisioned that the data gathering would be primarily informal when conducted in private and the Task Force was instructed to guarantee the anonymity of those giving information who sought it.

The Task Force was encouraged to use public meetings, open line telephone shows and other such devices as forums for public input.

2.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Task Force was instructed to prepare a report for presentation to the Minister through the Ministerial Committee which would:

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1. Examine the experiences of victims of spousal assault with the health and social service agencies, the RCMP, the criminal justice system and their communities;
2. Examine the needs of providers of community level services and law enforcers in providing services to battered spouses and their families;
3. Solicit advice from community persons and agencies regarding locally appropriate alternatives, options and coordinating mechanisms whereby spousal assault can be dealt with most effectively;
4. Recommend to the Committee how best to sensitize and communicate to the public and the service deliverers the needs and concerns of victims of spousal assault;
5. Recommend ways by which federal and territorial government agencies, the RCMP and community groups can cooperate to ensure the efficient sharing of information and expertise in this area at the community level.

Through these examinations, it was anticipated that the Task Force would be able to achieve a number of goals important to the Government of the Northwest Territories. They are:

1. To identify the problems of battered spouses who wish to seek assistance;
2. To identify the problem of "front line" persons in providing service to battered spouses;
3. To determine from the victim and the provider of service
 - (a) the nature and extent of spousal assault;
 - (b) the community attitudes towards the problem;
 - (c) ideas on how to provide safety and ongoing assistance;
 - (d) to prioritize recommendations.

In addition, because the role of the Task Force was primarily a public one, we were asked to determine the gaps and problems in service as they are perceived at the community level and to improve public awareness of and sensitivity to the issues of spousal assault.

The Task Force accepted these tasks and this mandate. We have included enquiries into the problems of batterers and an examination and an evaluation of counselling and treatment programs which may assist them. As

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we conducted our investigations, we were asked by many people whether our mandate included an examination of mental abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse and abuse of parents and grandparents. The Task Force made it clear that our focus was spousal assault but, at the same time, we gathered information about other aspects of family violence. We did this in part because it is often difficult to separate spousal assault from other types of violence occurring in families and, in part because we came quickly to realize that there are other aspects of family violence of serious proportions in Northwest Territories communities which ought not to be ignored.

The Minister saw the Task Force undertaking for the Ministerial Committee the job of determining what can be done to make the victim's life safer and better. Once these recommendations were received, the Ministerial Committee would recommend to the Minister how each of their respective agencies could fulfill its mandate. We were encouraged by the Minister to write our report in such a way that not only the members of the Ministerial Committee but the communities we visited and the professionals who work there would see the report as their own and as a way of communicating their concerns and their ideas to the policy levels of the respective agencies.

There was some concern expressed that we might encounter significant negative attitudes. There was some negativism, but the overwhelming response was positive, though in many instances, critical of past and present initiatives, both at the institutional and at the community levels.

Chapter 3

LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

1 AID TO VICTIMS

3.1.1 INFORMATION

The Task Force found that victims in their homes are often cut off from the rest of society in ways which surprised and sometimes shocked us. Some are virtual prisoners in their own houses and if they go out, they must account to their spouses for every activity while they are away. If they are to be helped and if they are to help themselves, they need information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that information on the protection, services, health care, counselling and other needs victims of spousal assault be distributed through the press, on radio and television throughout the Northwest Territories. This information must be made available in the native languages and in English;
- that posters and pamphlets be distributed and made available in nursing stations, hospitals, doctors' offices, community health units, RCMP detachments, social welfare offices, regional council, hamlet, settlement and band and Metis local offices as well as through the native court workers and Maliiganik Tukisiiniavik, explaining the rights of victims and advising them whom they can contact for assistance;
- that the Government of the Northwest Territories underwrite the cost of preparing, translating and distributing the media information, the posters and pamphlets but that the preparation of the material may best be undertaken by court workers, Maliiganik Tukisiiniavik and community action groups with assistance from government when requested.

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3.1.2 VICTIM ADVOCACY

The Task Force found that many victims live in fear. In addition to accounting to their spouses for every move they make outside the home, they often have small children to look after. They seldom have their own transportation. They should not be expected to visit or contact all the social and other agencies that might assist them. A substantial number of victims do not have telephones in their homes. Those that do may not have the privacy to use those telephones to see assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Government of the Northwest Territories, together with community action groups, prepare for and set up a victim advocacy counselling network using volunteers and professionals to be trained to assist victims to find out about and apply for assistance for which they may be eligible whether they choose to remain with their spouses or leave the relationship.

3.1.3 MEDICAL ATTENTION

The Task Force found that the most immediate need of any victims of spousal assault is medical attention. Some victims complained to the Task Force that they want medical aid with as few questions asked about the cause of their injuries as are medically necessary for their proper treatment. They are often severely emotionally upset.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that apparent victims of spousal assault be given immediate medical attention, comfort and sympathy which deals comprehensively with their trauma and that, where circumstances permit, they be encouraged to remain in the hospitals or nursing stations until safe alternate accommodation can be found.

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3.1.4 ACCESS TO OTHER ASSISTANCE DURING THE COURSE OF
MEDICAL TREATMENT

The Task Force found some that victims do want to volunteer information about the cause of their injuries and are prepared to respond to questions and suggestions put by medical personnel. They are often anxious about the safety of children and other family members they left behind in the home. They often need assistance that doctors and nurses cannot give them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that victims seeking medical attention be provided, on request, with access to a social worker, the RCMP or a community volunteer;
- that medical personnel be aware of the whole spectrum of community resources so they can advise and assist the victim or put her in touch with others who can help upon request.

3.1.5 PROTECTION

The Task Force found that victims of spousal assault often call the RCMP to protect them and to stop a spousal assault in progress. Victims need that protection even though they may be reluctant because of fear or other causes to lay charges or to give evidence. The Task Force found that many victims believe that the RCMP do not treat all spousal assaults as seriously as they should.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that RCMP members continue to provide the same service and protection to victims of spousal assault even when those victims are reluctant to assist with criminal investigation and prosecution of their complaint;
- that the RCMP consider all complaints of spousal assault as serious and

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urgent;

- that RCMP members and others advise victims that batterers should, wherever possible be prosecuted in the criminal courts to assist in exposing and deterring batterers from their crime.

3.1.6 VICTIM INDEPENDENCE

Victims need protection and they need to know what protection is available to them. They must be provided with information and advice but they must be allowed to make their own decisions which must be respected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- that those who work with and offer assistance to victims of spousal assault be made aware of the nature of spousal assault and the problems faced by victims as part of their initial and in-service training whether they are professionals or lay counsellors and advocates.

3.1.7 SHELTER FOR VICTIMS

The Task Force found that victims who have fled or have been rescued from spousal assault need shelter in a safe place where they and their children can be cared for and where sympathy and comfort can be provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- that when victims come to public attention, those to whom they turn (RCMP, nurses, social workers, community action workers etc.) be responsible to assist victims to find immediate safe shelter in their own community or where necessary, in another community;
- that where shelter must be paid for or where transportation must be provided to safe shelter, that the cost be borne by the Government of the Northwest Territories;
- that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to all reasonable community requests to provide safe shelter facilities for victims of spousal assault and their families and that together with community action

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groups the Government of the Northwest Territories seek ways of providing safe shelter and safe shelter facilities for victims and their families using existing buildings and community facilities wherever it is feasible to do so.

3.1.8 THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN THE COMMUNITY

The Task Force was informed that victims of spousal assault and their children are often advised to leave their home communities to avoid continued spousal assault. This did not seem fair to many for whom family and community are so important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that victims and their children be assisted by professionals and community action groups to remain in their community, and that they be protected, sheltered and where necessary given priority for available housing, day care services and local training and adult education;
- that the courts take into account the importance of the right of victims to remain in their own homes and communities when they deal with applications for peace bonds, bail review and the sentencing of convicted batterers.

3.1.9 THE RIGHT TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Task Force found that victims of spousal assault sometimes lack and always need the visible and vocal support of their families and communities whether they remain with the battering spouse or choose to leave that spouse.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that community action groups, municipal councils, band councils and native and women's organizations publicly discuss the problems of spousal assault and take positions and make statements censuring it;

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- that community leaders and elders take a greater part in advising and counselling victims and batterers and that they be prepared to appear before the courts wherever necessary to support victims and their children.

3.1.10 COUNSELLING FOR VICTIMS

The Task Force found that, although victims must make their own decisions, they and their children need professional and lay counselling to help them sort out their lives and to make informed choices between options which may be available to them. In many communities, victims complained that there was no one to turn to and no one to talk to about their problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that victims of spousal assault have access to counselling for themselves and their children. Wherever possible, such counselling should be made available in the victim's home community, but that outreach counselling, regional crisis and help lines and long distance telephone access to professionals in other communities be provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories Departments of Health and Social Services;
- that as a longer term objective, the Government of the Northwest Territories work towards the provision of counselling for victims in their own language as soon as possible and in any event, before division of the Northwest Territories in 1987.

3.1.11 MAKING COUNSELLING EFFECTIVE

Victims who have fled their homes need counselling. They may be faced with problems they have never encountered before. Some of these questions were outlined for us in a public meeting in Inuvik. They include:

- If she leaves, how can she support her children?
- If she cannot support them, will she lose them?
- Will she be provided with financial support if she leaves?
- Where will she get it?

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- Where will she live?
- Who will provide housing and who will pay for it?
- How do you find out about housing?
- What if there is no housing in the community where she is living?
- Will she get training or be able to find out about it?
- Can she go to one place or will she have to go to several to get the information she needs?
- If she has to go to Manpower to find out about training, to the Housing Association to apply for accommodation, to a social worker to apply for welfare and day care subsidies, who will look after her children while she is attending to all these things?
- If she leaves but wants to stay in her community, are there ways she can keep her husband from bothering and threatening her?
- Will the police help her to get a restraining order or a peace bond?
- If they will not help, is there a court worker who will?
- Are the court workers provided only for native people or for non-natives as well?
- Could she go to a crisis centre in another community?
- How could she get to one and who would send her?
- Must she have a separation agreement before she leaves?
- If her husband will not agree, can the court grant her a legal separation?
- Is there anyone to help to answer these questions or to find out the information she must know?

The Task Force discovered that there is an unfulfilled need for victim advocacy within our social systems. A victim should be able to contact a social worker or a court worker in person or by telephone and be helped to find the answers to these and other questions without the exposure, embarrassment or physical risk. In many cases victims may want this information before they decide

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whether or not to leave the battering situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that social workers and court workers be trained to respond to the enquiries victims have relating to their social service needs;
- that the duties of social workers and court workers include acting as an intermediary and an advocate for victims who may not (for whatever reason) be able to do these things for themselves.

Other kinds of counselling are also required. The victim who is considering whether to leave the battering situation is often in emotional as well as moral crisis. The victim may need to speak to a lay or professional counsellor and may also want to discuss the moral and spiritual issues with a member of their church.

The Task Force realizes that professional counselling may not be available in every community in the Northwest Territories. However, we do live in the age of instant communications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that access to professional counselling on the telephone be provided as part of northern social and health care services. Some such counselling might come directly to the victims and their children. Lay counsellors, social workers and nurses could extend the expertise of a small number of professionals in the Northwest Territories in the same way that nurses have for decades been given direction from physicians over the telephone and short wave radio in remote regions.

3.1.12 HOME CARE FOR VICTIMS

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When a person is recovering from illness or surgery, society often provides special homecare. This consists of assistance with cooking and household chores, babysitting, the running of errands and assistance with transportation. The Task Force was advised that victims of spousal assault in crisis shelters, strange communities and new surroundings and new circumstances have similar needs. Victims told the Task Force that simple acts such as having a cup of coffee made for and served to them and having someone take care of and amuse their children provided them with great comfort and relief.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that community action groups together with local and regional social workers and other professionals identify ways volunteers can assist victims and their children who are recovering from the effects and trauma of spousal assault by providing care, comfort, assistance with household and community obligations to the extent the victim needs and wishes the help.

3.1.13 CHILDCARE

The Task Force found that victims suffering the trauma of spousal assault and burdened by new responsibilities (in particular, if they have left their spouses) need day care services. Their children are often suffering emotionally and mentally from having witnessed assault and as a result of separation from home, family and sometimes community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that victims of spousal assault be recognized by day care centres, community action groups, the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Social Services and others as having a priority requirement for the best available day care services. Where these do not exist, they should be provided by volunteer and community action groups through churches, schools or other available facilities;
- that where there is a cost for these services, that cost should be borne

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by the Government of the Northwest Territories for extended periods to enable the victim to reestablish in the community and work force.

3.1.14 CRISIS LINES

The Task Force found that victims suffering emotional stress and depression may desperately need to talk to someone about their problems. They may not want to or be unable to leave their homes. They may not want to talk face to face but may prefer the anonymity of the telephone. Although many victims, particularly in the Western Arctic do not have telephones in their homes, a significant number do.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Government of the Northwest Territories, together with Northwest Telecommunications and Bell Telephone, assist community action groups to develop crisis lines on community or regional basis;
- that such lines be operated and maintained as much of the time as possible, but particularly during the weekends;
- that the Government of the Northwest Territories underwrite the costs of providing space and telephone installation rental and long distance charges but that such crisis lines be operated by community action groups to the maximum extent possible;
- that community action groups recruit volunteers to serve on the crisis line who are proficient in native languages;
- that the Government of the Northwest Territories, through the Department of Social Services, provide proper training for those who volunteer to work on crisis lines;
- that mental health associations be consulted regarding existing crisis line training programs and, where appropriate, assist with volunteer training.

3.1.15 VICTIM REPRESENTATION IN COURT

The victim is seldom familiar with the criminal justice system and often remains unaware of her rights and obligations. The crown attorney's interests

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are those of the state. Although he is interested in the safety and protection of the public including the victim, the crown attorney does not act for the victim. In court nobody does. The Task Force found that in criminal court proceedings, the batterer, as an accused person, is provided with representation, often at public expense, and is afforded all protections of the law.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the interests of the victim be represented by an advocate in the judicial process. This advocate might, but need not, be a lawyer. The advocate should be a person familiar with the criminal law and the courts. A court workers or lay advocate from a community action group could do this kind of work capably and effectively. The advocate could, with permission, address the court but the main role would be to explain court procedures to the victims, attend court with the victim and prepare background information and identify witnesses that the crown attorney might wish to call to give evidence.

3.1.16 VICTIMS' LEGAL RIGHTS IN THE CIVIL COURTS

The Task Force found that victims have rights, most of which they may pursue in the civil courts. The remedies which a victim may seek include divorce, support or maintenance for herself and her children, custody of children, possession of the family home, division of matrimonial property, peace bond and judicial separation. These rights have to be sued for under a variety of federal and territorial laws. The Task Force found that victims seldom know about these laws and cannot use them without the help of lawyers. Before going to court to ask for most of these remedies, victims must give notice to batterers. Victims are often unwilling to go through the resulting confrontations which can occur between the giving of notice and the hearing of the case in court.

The Task Force found that in other jurisdictions the problem is similar. However, the Task Force learned that in the State of Tennessee in the United States a spousal assault law has been passed which gathers most of the relief victims may seek in courts into one law and provides a simple and less confrontive way of starting proceedings than is used in courts in the Northwest Territories. The Task Force learned that a similar law is under active consideration by the Rosebud Tribal Council in the Dakotas and that they hope to institute such a law and administer it through tribal courts.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Department of Justice and Public Services of the Government of the Northwest Territories review its own domestic relations legislation together with the Tennessee spousal assault statute and other applicable alternatives and, in consultation with the Native Court Workers of the Northwest Territories, Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik, the major native organizations and the Law Society of the Northwest Territories, prepare before the end of 1985, a draft Spousal Assault Ordinance for discussion and tabling before the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

3.1.17 SHELTER AND PROTECTION

There are few institutional shelter facilities in the Northwest Territories. The YWCA runs such a facility in Yellowknife using a number of apartments in the Northern United Place. In Fort Smith there is a crisis centre which takes people in who are in crisis for a variety of reasons including the victims of spousal assault and their children. The Fort Smith crisis centre is located in a wing of the old St. Anne's Hospital which has been adapted for the purpose. Professionals throughout the Territories have referred victims of spousal assault to the Yellowknife shelter from a cross section of northern communities. There is often more demand on the Yellowknife facility than it can accommodate and victims must often seek shelter privately or wait for available accommodation.

There is a need for more crisis shelter accommodation throughout the Territories. We found almost universal agreement on that point. Beyond that point, opinions differed. Concern was expressed that sending victims of spousal assault from small Dene/Metis and Inuit settlements to comparatively urban non-native communities like Yellowknife, Inuvik, Frobisher Bay and Fort Smith was not a good idea.

On the other hand, many people recommended against establishing crisis centres in many of the small communities. In an urban crisis centre a victim is unlikely to have contact or confrontation with the batterer. In villages of only a few hundred people, there is no such anonymity. Victims might very well become prisoners in small settlement crisis centres.

Community representatives will have to examine their own situations and needs. We expect that there will be submissions from community action groups for crisis centres and shelters in various communities in the Northwest

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Territories.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that where requests and initiatives regarding shelters arise out of the needs of the community or region that they be supported.

The Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada control a large number of dwellings and a variety of public buildings throughout the north. Some of these are vacant or underused. Adaptations could be made to buildings in many communities in the north. The Task Force observed that in school hostels, community hospitals, nursing stations, transient quarters and government dwellings, there is sometimes vacant accommodation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the possibility of using existing accommodation and facilities as shelters be explored.

Running a shelter or crisis centre involves more than the provision of a bed and meals. Victims and their children need protection, clothing and nourishment. They may have neglected their health and require medical attention. Victims and their children are often emotionally upset and need comfort, care and love. The victim is the person the children look to but she is frequently in no condition to care for them.

A crisis centre cannot provide all those things itself. It needs community support. People must volunteer to babysit, to assist the victim with errands, to accompany the victim to retrieve clothing and personal articles. Members of the community may have to donate time, clothing, toys and books for the

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children. The victim must also be included in community activities wherever possible, whether they be crafts programs, church, meetings or bingos.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that community commitment be assessed as one of the prerequisites to setting up and staffing crisis centres in northern communities.

Shelters and crisis centres need not be a drain on financial resources. In the United States such centres run businesses which make and market clothing and plants. There is tremendous therapeutic and educational value in giving victims a place in a successful business.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the viability of businesses which can be run within crisis centres be studied and be included in medium and long term planning for such facilities where appropriate.

Shelter facilities in the Northwest Territories are partially funded by Social Services. The funding is modest. In the case of the Fort Smith Crisis Centre, the allowance for beds occupied for more than 4 days is discretionary. Shelters underfunded or precariously funded cannot be expected to operate indefinitely.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Government of the Northwest Territories and particularly, the Department of Social Services, review its financial commitment to crisis centres and shelters and the basis upon which the contributions are made;
- that the Social Service contributions be increased to underwrite the operations and maintenance costs of such facilities;
- that the public and government recognize the importance of the availability of space in crisis centres and not just the level of occupancy in assessing the value of shelter facilities;
- that future shelters be adequately and fairly funded so that they can continue to operate both in the times when they are full to overflowing and in times when they have space available.

There is confusion and concern about shelters whether they be transition houses, safe houses, crisis centres or shelters. People are unsure what these terms mean and are unsure of the implications of having them established.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that there be public discussion and information provided as part of the decision making process which precedes the establishment of such facilities in communities and regions of the Northwest Territories;
- that, should a transition house be established it should be set up as a pilot project. It should be monitored carefully and reports on its capabilities, usefulness and problems should be conducted both internally and independently. Reports on the pilot project should be directed to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and should be tabled for discussion in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Summaries should be provided, translated and distributed for debate and reaction from the communities.

3.1.18 TRANSITION

The Task Force found throughout the Northwest Territories that many victims are

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prepared to return to marriages and relationships scarred with strife and physical abuse. They have faith in these relationships and are determined to make them work.

Nevertheless, there will be spouses who will choose to separate from their mates for longer periods of time, sometime permanently. These people need more than shelter. Most shelters and crisis centres provide emergency help only. Victims and their families can stay only a matter of days, occasionally a few weeks, in such facilities. Behind them there is often a long line of others whose needs are just as great and whose circumstances may be more urgent.

Many spouses who feel they must make an indefinite or permanent break need assistance at the most fundamental life skills level. Some need job training. Some have little or no wage earning experience outside the home. They and their families need counselling while they are in transition. They need places to stay and in the Northwest Territories where there are housing shortages in most communities, this is a dilemma.

These victims and their families should not always be forced to go to regional centres or to Yellowknife. The Task Force questions why they should leave their homes at all. In one eastern Arctic community it was suggested that there be transition homes for batterers in small communities so that victims and children can remain in the community.

The Task Force was told that many victims leave their home communities because they are criticized by community and family for the decisions they have made to leave their spouses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that community and government initiatives to assist victims and their families in transition remain flexible. Some victims and children may need to stay in the community. Others may wish to leave, at least in the short term.

Those that do relocate will be faced with new problems. They will be cut off from the relationships which exist in small communities. They will face culture shock, loneliness and fear. Day care services which the extended family used to provide will have to be paid for. Housing, transportation and dietary readjustments will have to be made. New contacts and friendships will

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have to be established by people who may be painfully unsure of themselves. The Task Force realizes the importance of assisting victims and their families in transition.

Victims have told the Task Force that some of the difficulties they experienced during transition arose out of their financial dependence on the social services agencies. Many found the experience of justifying welfare allowances embarrassing and humiliating. Social workers sometimes urged victims to take court action against their estranged spouses for financial support. Victims fear retaliation by batterers who might be taken to court for support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Department of Social Services review the requirements of and the benefits available to victims of spousal assault and consider increasing benefits to victims and families in transition, waiving certain requirements and providing total day care costs.

3.2 TREATMENT AND ASSISTANCE FOR BATTERERS

3.2.1 COUNSELLING

Like victims, batterers have often been brought up in violent homes, witnessing spousal assault and experiencing violence themselves. Faced with what is often shameful behaviour towards their own spouses, they may feel cut off and unable to turn to anyone for help. Victims told members of the Task Force that while they were prepared to take counselling, they could not persuade the batterer to do so. The majority of batterers continue to refuse to discuss their problems with anyone. In the Whitehorse anger control counselling program, batterers have been through the courts and attend the sessions as a mandatory part of their probation. As people in the communities began to discuss spousal assault, some batterers began to contact the Task Force, indirectly at first and then directly, either on the telephone or on radio phone in programs and in public meetings. Refuges for batterers, "spousal assault anonymous" groups and anger control therapy were also suggested as approaches which might make it easier for batterers to face the need for help.

Concern was expressed that some social workers in the communities may not be

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the most suitable counsellors. In most Northwest Territories communities, however, there are substantial numbers of mature, well-respected individuals who might be persuaded to volunteer as lay counsellors to batterers. In some North Baffin communities, preliminary steps and discussions are taking place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that such counselling initiatives be given encouragement and recognition by the professionals in the community and the territorial and federal governments. Financial assistance could be provided as well, although the Task Force realizes that much of this counselling will have to be voluntary.

3.2.1.1 TREATMENT THROUGH THE COURTS

The courts play a positive and creative role in directing batterers to treatment and counselling. This is discussed at some length in subsection 3.6.8 on SENTENCING.

It is important that the courts are seen by the batterer as reinforcing positive community norms and values. This will involve a reaching out by the courts to the community and by the community to the courts. It was expressed to the Task Force that the court party does not spend enough time in communities to learn about community attitudes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that prosecutors and judges initially spend more time on spousal assault cases and meet with community action groups and leaders;
- that the community take responsibility to approach the Chief Judge of the Territorial Court and the judges of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories to open this dialogue and together to find the means within the law of reinforcing positive community values and objectives.

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3.2.1.2 LEGAL AID

Legal aid is provided to many of those charged with crimes in the Northwest Territories. It covers the defense up to the point of acquittal or conviction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that legal aid defense counsel should be given additional responsibilities under the legal aid plan to assist batterers to obtain treatment or counselling, either in their own community or region or while in jail;
- that the legal aid plan be reviewed to see whether in spousal assault cases lawyers should be retained to assist their clients to get treatment and counselling which they might not otherwise be able to obtain as a result of their own advocacy.

3.2.1.3 THE JAILS

Presently, there are no treatment or counselling programs for batterers although many spend months and years in jail in the Northwest Territories. Many batterers are sentenced and released from custody without having been counselled or rehabilitated in any way. Many batterers will either return to their spouses after release or will form new relationships in which new spouses will be put at risk and will be battered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Government of the Northwest Territories corrections authorities assess the counselling needs of those sentenced to prison for spousal assault crimes and to act on the recommendations that arise out of that needs assessment. Special attention should be paid to the involvement of trained counsellors from the communities so that counselling may take place in the native languages where appropriate. Such recommendations should be made public within 12 months.

3.3 ASSISTANCE TO SOCIAL WORKERS

The Task Force met with social workers many of whom responded to the questionnaire distributed by the Task Force. Social workers are concerned. They offer assistance to the victims of spousal assault and their families. However, the Task Force is concerned that some social workers lack the time and sometimes the skills to do effective counselling.

Without assistance from social workers victims of spousal assault would find their problems more difficult. Sometimes victims of spousal assault turn to social workers when they decide to leave a battering situation. They bring to the social worker problems of economic insecurity, lack of skills and training. In addition many victims have total responsibility for children who may themselves be suffering from emotional disturbance. Social workers must also work within rules and budgetary constraints. They must look for jobs for unskilled victims at a time when there are few jobs. They must assist victims and their children to find housing in communities where there is no housing. They must try to help the victim to make child care arrangements. They must do these things and many more with case loads which are large and varied. Often social workers do this work without the background of post secondary school education in social work. Frequently they are young and inexperienced. In some communities social work positions remain unfilled for substantial periods of time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Government of the Northwest Territories Departments of Health and Social Services and Health and Welfare Canada assess the training needs of social workers and provide them with courses of instruction and training they can take on the job to assist them to deal more effectively with the victims of spousal assault and their children;
- that the social work training program provided through Thebacha College and the developing Eastern Arctic College be expanded to teach social work students the necessary skills to deal effectively with family counselling and problems associated with domestic violence;
- that native social workers be encouraged with educational leave and

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bursaries to attend university programs in social work so that they may return to the north better qualified to deal with the social problems of family violence.

The Task Force has concluded that however many trained professional social workers there are, there will remain a need for trained lay counsellors and volunteers. These lay and volunteer counsellors could work as part of a team with advice and direction from professionals. The Task Force sees the need for a team of professionals to work with and through the lay counsellors and volunteers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Department of Social Services establish a core group of trained family counsellors who can themselves train and work with mature lay and volunteer family counsellors in communities across the Northwest Territories.

The Task Force found that social workers had varying familiarities with services, programs and the law relating to spousal assault problems. Sometimes social workers have different ideas of what is available to assist victims of spousal assault. In some situations social workers do not work as a team in their responses. The Task Force was informed that social workers and nurses who have learned of the availability of resources within and outside their communities have been able to direct and refer victims and others quickly and effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Department of Social Services review the availability of resources to assist victims and batterers and to compile the

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information into a handbook for the use of social workers, counsellors and others. The Department should be responsible for keeping this handbook up to date.

There are several individual citizen's and church groups concerned with family abuse. These groups are rapidly forming a network of contacts throughout the Northwest Territories which they are willing to share with social workers attempting to assist their clients. These groups will continue to be a source of information and ideas for social workers. It is not only for information and ideas that these groups may be of assistance. Their members often know of people who will take a victim and children into their household when other resources may not be available. They have in their membership volunteers and sometimes lay counsellors who can take over from the social worker and provide the kinds of assistance that is needed in dealing with the problems of spousal assault.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that social workers be advised of the addresses, telephone numbers and names of contact people in these community action groups, churches, committees and individuals.

Social workers expressed the need for clarification of their powers and duties. They are called upon to assist victims and their families to leave their communities and sometimes the Northwest Territories. They do this with some unease, particularly when they help victims and their families to go to southern Canada for shelter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Department of Social Services in consultation with lawyers in

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the Department of Justice and Public Services review the duties, responsibilities and powers of social workers and clarify what they may and may not do under present law. This clarification should be in the form of a report which should be submitted to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women before the end of the calendar year 1985.

Social workers were unsure whether they could make referrals to shelters and facilities in different parts of the Northwest Territories.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Department of Social Services meet with those who operate crisis centres and shelters in the Northwest Territories to discuss and clarify their ability and willingness to accept and to cope with referrals.

3.3.1 GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

The Canadian Association of Social Work Administrators in Health Facilities has reviewed in other parts of Canada the social work response to the problems of battered women and has produced a number of clear recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Department of Social Services review these recommendations and where they have not already done so, incorporate them in their approach and response to the victims of spousal assault. These recommendations are that directors of social work:
 1. develop departmental policies and procedures for the identification and management of domestic violence cases to

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- include specific protocols for child abuse and battered women;
2. ensure that the professional social work staff for which they are responsible have or are offering training opportunities to develop, practise competence to identify and work with domestic violence cases;
 3. allocate sufficient staff to ensure that the social work component in the domestic violence treatment program can be carried out;
 4. ensure that the social work protocol for victims of spousal assault includes a mandatory follow up by telephone or in person within a specified period, regardless of the victim's initial response to the offer of service;
 5. obtain and provide pamphlets and brochures detailing self-protection, precautions and local crisis services for victims of domestic violence;
 6. personally participate in or delegate a specific social worker colleague to participate in multi-disciplinary in service education programs which may include consultant/management functions e.g., child/family protection teams.

3.3.2 TOWARDS AN INTERAGENCY APPROACH

It is important that social workers work closely with nursing station and hospital and community health centre personnel as well as with the police so that each knows what the other can and is prepared to do in emergency and follow up situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Department of Social Services take the lead role in the coordination of information between the governmental agencies and others delivering protection, health and social services to northern communities;
- that together the agencies involved discuss and work out a professional code of ethics to facilitate the interdisciplinary discussion of spousal assault problems and to facilitate the exchange of experience and information so that victims, batterers and their

families can be assisted to the maximum extent possible.

3.4 ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATORS

The Task Force met with principals and teachers from many communities in the north. An experienced educator can recognize the children who witness and suffer from violence in their homes. They do not learn as well or as quickly. They are often distracted, withdrawn and troubled.

The Task Force met with young people whose parents were victims and batterers. We met with those who provide day care to young children and those who deal with children in crisis centres and shelters. All informed us that from the earliest age, children learn the lessons of spousal assault and are deeply affected by them. In one meeting a representative of the Task force discussed spousal assault with adolescents at the junior high school level. They had deeply ingrained attitudes which were similar to those of adults in their community.

The Task Force was impressed by the willingness and questioning minds of young people, both those who saw spousal assault in their own homes and those who saw it in their communities. Family life education must begin somewhere.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that family life education should begin in the schools and the churches.

To teach family life education and to inform young people about the illegality and immorality of family violence requires that educators be informed of the problems. Curriculum development should be thoroughly researched and carefully carried out. The coordinator of family life education in the Northwest Territories Department of Health, along with others, has done considerable work towards the development of a family life education component in a health curriculum along for use in classrooms throughout the Northwest Territories.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that curriculum planners from the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Education in consultation with the coordinator of family life education in the Department of Health develop a family life education curriculum suitable for students from the early grades through high school. This curriculum should include information and lessons about family violence including spousal assault.

3.5 CHURCHES

The Task Force met with representatives of a number of churches in many communities. The sanctity of marriage and family relationships is spiritually, as well as socially, important. Clergy must wrestle with the difficult realities of spousal assault and the fact that victims and batterers should not always remain together.

Many clergy and their families take active though often quiet roles in family counselling and in assisting victims and their families who seek refuge from batterers. The churches in the Northwest Territories have been supportive of the community social action groups which have begun to form in northern communities. They are often involved in assisting these groups in a variety of ways, both with advice and sometimes with funding. In 1984 in Frobisher Bay, the Anglican Synod discussed family violence and spousal assault and passed a motion expressing concern and condemning family violence. These are all good and useful initiatives and the Task Force hopes that the churches will continue to play these important roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the clergy should consider family life education as an important

part of their liturgy.

Whether instruction is given from the pulpit or elsewhere in church activities, the Task Force believes that northern peoples look to the churches to make moral statements about spousal assault and other forms of family violence. Those clergy we spoke to felt it was consistent with Christian teaching to preach against spousal assault. Some were nonetheless reluctant to do so because of the sensitivity of the topic. As northern peoples continue the debate about spousal assault and other forms of family violence, the churches should have less hesitation in discussing this subject openly with their parishioners. From many comments made to the Task Force, the church-going public in the Northwest Territories is looking to their churches for guidance on this subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the clergy play a role in stimulating discussion about the moral and spiritual values which are affected by spousal assault in their parishes and in the wider community.

3.6 ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE LAW AND THE COURTS

Two years ago the RCMP were directed to lay charges in spousal assault cases without requiring either a complaint from the victim. This was an important policy change because it signalled the determination of the Parliament of Canada to have spousal assault treated as a crime. The policy change has led to problems, however, and is being used in the north in more discretionary ways, though not consistently. The problems are:

- when victims know the RCMP will lay charges they are sometimes reluctant to call the RCMP even to act as peace officers to break up the incident.
- victims now fear greater retribution where the RCMP are called in than they did formerly.

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- RCMP may lay charges which cannot be successfully prosecuted because the victim is reluctant, sometimes afraid, to testify and will refuse to give evidence or decline to tell the truth.
- where a batterer knows he can, by threats or promises to the victim, prevent her from giving evidence, his disrespect for the law and the courts grows.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that, because it appears to be more important to the victim that the RCMP investigate and restore the peace than whether batterers can be prosecuted, that this policy be reviewed.

3.6.1 INVESTIGATION AND PREPARATION OF CASES

Children and parents have frequently witnessed much and are willing to give evidence. Their evidence will in many cases assist in obtaining a conviction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that RCMP must be prepared in appropriate cases to take statements from and call children and other household members as witnesses in spousal assault trials.

3.6.2 BAIL AND JUDICIAL INTERIM RELEASE

The Task Force found that where a batterer has been charged with assault, his right to bail without conditions is seldom tested in the courts. Although the court may in many cases be reluctant to keep a person charged with a less serious spousal assault in custody pending trial, conditions may be imposed on a defendant to ensure that he does not interfere with witnesses, refrains from consumption of alcohol and where the parties are not living together that he not visit the premises where the alleged victim

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resides. Where another spousal assault takes place pending trial, the batterer may forfeit his right to freedom before his trial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- that judicial interim release hearings be held in appropriate spousal assault cases before the courts to set protective bail conditions and where required, that crown prosecutors recommend that judicial interim release be denied.

3.6.3 DIVERSION INSTEAD OF COURT PROCEEDINGS

There are cases of spousal assault where both victim and batterer are anxious to obtain help together. They may want counselling, alcohol and drug rehabilitation or anger control therapy. The RCMP may have been called to answer the spousal assault complaint and yet they may agree that courts are less likely to provide the solutions the couple needs. Diversion of the kind presently used in juvenile delinquency cases might be useful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that in appropriate cases RCMP officers, in consultation with the family and others in the community, explore diversion for batterers who might otherwise be prosecuted in the courts.

3.6.4 PEACE OFFICER AND PROSECUTORIAL DISCRETION

The RCMP officer and crown prosecutor have wide discretion and bear a heavy responsibility in spousal assault cases. The RCMP determine whether there is enough evidence to lay a charge and whether the victim is in danger of a further battering giving the RCMP reason to take the battering spouse into custody. He decides whether there should be a bail hearing. The RCMP determine how much investigation is enough.

The crown attorney evaluates the case, and decides whether to prosecute. The RCMP officer may be new in the community. The crown attorney is almost

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always unfamiliar with its workings except as he may be advised by the RCMP officer. A case may be passed from one crown prosecutor to another several times before completion. Spousal assault being a community problem, the Task Force questions whether the RCMP and crown attorneys should have to make these important discretionary decisions on their own.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the the RCMP and crown prosecutors consult with other professionals in the community, court workers, church and community workers who may be able to provide information which will make for informed use of the discretionary powers which RCMP officers and prosecutors must exercise.

3.6.5 SPECIAL PROSECUTORS, SPECIAL INVESTIGATORS AND SPECIAL TRAINING

The Task Force believes that spousal assault is a most serious crime. It involves breach of trust between men and women. It corrupts the morals of children and teaches them violent behaviour. It attacks the family and the community. The RCMP has set up special units and provides additional training in commercial crime, criminal identification, drug investigation and a host of other things.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the RCMP provide special training both to recruits and in service on spousal assault investigation and case preparation. If necessary, a special unit should be considered in G division to advise and assist members of local detachments with difficult cases;
- that for prosecutors in the Northwest Territories the Attorney General should provide special training (courses and seminars) in the prosecution of spousal assault cases. Where such training is available under the auspices of a provincial Attorney General, the Attorney General of Canada may be able to make special arrangements;

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- that where prosecutors and peace officers have special interests and aptitudes, spousal assault investigations and prosecutions be assigned to them to follow through to conclusion.

3.6.6 WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ON THE BENCH

The decisions made through the justice system to investigate, prosecute, acquit, convict and sentence batterers are predominantly made by men. People asked the Task Force why all the judges, almost all of the RCMP members and the majority of crown attorneys are men. The comments were directed at the appearance that the law enforcement and the justice system are dominated by men. The Task Force believes that it is important that there be women as well as men in the decision making positions in law enforcement and the courts, particularly in cases dealing with family violence. The impression should not be left that the important decisions in spousal assault cases are the prerogative of men.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the federal Minister of Justice and the Commissioner of the RCMP consider seriously the appointment and assignment of women to judicial office and more women to positions as crown attorneys and assignment to G Division postings in the RCMP.

3.6.7 VICTIM REPRESENTATION

In criminal court cases the accused batterer is well represented. In the Northwest Territories his lawyer is frequently paid for or subsidized by the government through a generous legal aid program. The batterer may be assisted in the justice of the peace or higher courts by a native court worker. He is presumed innocent until proven guilty. He need say nothing in his own defense. If convicted, the court will hear submissions on his behalf in mitigation of sentence. By contrast, the victim is not represented. The victim can be compelled to give evidence. The crown attorney's interests are those of the state. Although he is interested in the safety and protection of the public, including the victim, the crown attorney does not act for the victim. In court nobody does.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the interests of the victim be represented by an advocate in the judicial process. This advocate might, but need not, be a lawyer. The advocate should be a person familiar with the criminal law and the courts. A court worker or lay advocate from a community action group could do this kind of work capably and effectively. The advocate could, with permission, address the court, but the main roles would be to explain the procedures to the victim, attend court with the victim and prepare background information and identify witnesses that counsel, especially the prosecutor, might wish to call to give evidence.

3.6.8 SENTENCING

The Task Force found that concern was expressed that the sentences handed down to convicted batterers do not generally deter them or others in the communities from further battering. Judges look for sentences which will deter batterers and discourage other people in the community from committing similar crimes. Judges also look for a sentence which may help batterers to reform. Finally, judges look for sentences which may help to rehabilitate batterers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that judges in the Northwest Territories consider whether the sentences they are handing down for spousal assault act either as a general deterrent to the public or as a specific deterrent to the individual.

The Task Force found that there are no corrections programs in the Northwest Territories which deal specifically with the reformation or

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rehabilitation of those convicted of battering their spouses. Individual staff at the Yellowknife, Baffin and Hay River Correctional Centres have shown an interest in the establishment of such programs.

The Task Force was informed that a Yukon pilot project provides group counselling for batterers as an aspect of probation. The batterer can choose between a jail sentence and an eight week mandatory anger control therapy program. The results have been encouraging. The psychologists counsel the batterers and will counsel their spouses as well on request.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Government of the Northwest Territories, Departments of Social Services and Corrections investigate the possibilities of an anger control therapy program for convicted batterers. If the two important sentencing principles of reformation and rehabilitation are to have any meaning in spousal assault cases, programs of this type must be undertaken;
- that in corrections programs, both in the jails and through probation services, offenders should be confronted with and, where possible, be made to discuss spousal assault and to attend lectures, film presentations and group discussions about spousal assault. Such confrontations should be part of programs which can be run within jails and in communities throughout the north.

3.7 MEDICAL CARE PROFESSIONALS

3.7.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

Health care to the victims of spousal assault is provided in the larger communities by doctors in their clinics and officers and through regional hospitals by doctors and nurses. In the majority of communities health care is provided by registered nurses working in two's and three's in small remote communities. The nursing station is often the first place victims of spousal assault go. Sometimes they are straightforward about the cause of their injuries, other times, nurses and doctors suspect they are dealing with injuries which were caused by spousal assault though it may be denied by the victim. Nurses and doctors see their primary role being a medical one to deal with the physical injuries. Some will recommend that victims seek protection from the police and assistance elsewhere in the community. Nurses and doctors who spoke to the Task Force felt that the confidentiality required of them prevented their sharing information with the police or others without the victim's permission. They were not just concerned with confidentiality, they were also worried that if they passed information along which caused the police or others to ask questions that the victim might, on subsequent occasions, not look for medical aid when in need.

Many nurses and doctors advised that they bent the normal rules and procedures to permit nursing stations and hospitals to be used as refuges. Sometimes a patient who would normally be discharged, would be allowed to remain a few extra days occupying a hospital or nursing station bed. In one regional hospital blankets have been provided to victims and children who have sought refuge in the hospital waiting room.

Doctors and nurses who pointed to ethical requirements that they keep confidential information provided by patients admitted that where complaints are made of sexual assault or child abuse, they have overriding duties to report such incidents to the police. There are special sexual assault kits and procedures to follow which may be used with the written consent of the victim.

The question arises whether in situations where victims admit being injured as a result of spousal assault doctors, nurses and other medical personnel should be under obligations to observe certain protocols which would gather and preserve evidence which might later be used in court proceedings where charges are laid and proceeded with. Photographs could be taken of injuries reportedly caused by spousal assault. These could be placed in an envelope which is sealed with the patient's file and released

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to the law enforcement authorities for use as evidence with the victim's consent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that procedures and protocols be established for the gathering and preservation of spousal assault evidence and that where victims of spousal assault disclose the cause of their injuries, nurses and doctors be required to gather and preserve such evidence to be kept in the patient's file until permission to release them to the patient or the RCMP has been given by him or her.

3.7.2 MENTAL EXAMINATION OF BATTERERS

Concern was expressed to the Task Force that many batterers suffer from psychological problems. Some have threatened the lives of victims, their own children and other family members. Some have threatened to take their own lives should the victim complain, leave them or lay charges.

Victims, concerned family members and others have brought these threats to the attention of RCMP, social workers, nurses and doctors. Professionals advise that under the Mental Health Ordinance, unless the batterer consents to a psychiatric examination or is arrested in connection with an offense, he cannot be required to take a mental or psychiatric examination or assessment.

Should the Mental Health Ordinance of the Northwest Territories be reviewed to provide for mental examinations under any other circumstances? Should members of the family or others be able to have a person committed for a mental examination upon application in writing to a court?

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that a review of the involuntary committal provisions under the Mental Health Ordinance be done with the objective of making it possible to have batterers with suspected psychological problems committed

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involuntarily if necessary for mental examination in ways not presently permitted under the Ordinance. The Task Force recognizes the needs to safeguard the rights of the individual against arbitrary and unfair committal;

- that community and family members, as well as professionals, be considered as having important roles in the committal process;
- that the review of the involuntary committal provisions of the Mental Health Ordinance be carried out in consultation with medical professionals, the Mental Health Association, the Law Society of the Northwest Territories, the Native Court Workers of the Northwest Territories, Malliganik Tukisiiniakvik and the major native organizations. Following this review, the Government of the Northwest Territories legal drafting division should be instructed to prepare a draft amendment to the involuntary committal provisions of the Mental Health Ordinance before the end of 1985 for discussion and tabling in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories early in 1986.

The Task Force found that some doctors and nurses were not aware of the other resources in the community which could assist victims of spousal assault. There were no protocols, either in regional or cottage hospitals or in nursing stations, for referral of victims of spousal assault to other agencies or community groups. There were no codes of ethics or protocols which would enable medical personnel to share information with the police or other agency representatives and no corresponding statutory or other policy obligations to share such information.

Doctors and nurses could be trained by professional counsellors so that they could assist victims of spousal assault who are prepared to discuss the cause of their injuries. Doctors and nurses could be made aware of the community support groups, social service programs and resources, location of crisis centres and transition facilities and could be backed up by a social worker with specific responsibilities for victims of spousal assault.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Northwest Territories Department of Health together with the Department of National Health and Welfare develop protocols and

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procedures for referrals of victims of spousal assault to other agencies and community groups;

- that the Northwest Territories Department of Health, the Department of National Health and Welfare together with the RCMP and the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Social Services develop and agree to be bound by an inter agency code of ethics to enable them to share information about victims with confidence and confidentiality;
- that doctors and nurses be made and kept aware of the other resources in their communities and regions to which victims and their children may be referred for care and assistance.

3.8 ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

The Task Force has found that while the use of alcohol may not be the root cause for all incidents of spousal assault, it is a contributing factor.

People interviewed in communities have said that a settlement may be peaceful, until the plane arrives with the 'shipment'. One RCMP officer said that within 4 hours after an alcohol shipment arrives, there will almost certainly be domestic violence.

Elders in communities have said that the brutal assaults they witness did not occur before alcohol was introduced into the communities.

A member of the clergy in one community said two ladies of his community regularly get drunk as a defensive measure. They knew when their husbands became drunk they would be victims and they drank because "...then it doesn't hurt as much."

Influential leaders in several communities expressed the view that the government is in the business of selling alcohol and should be aware that it is contributing to this problem.

Where alcohol is available, in 'wet' communities, spousal assault is readily apparent and frequent. However, the Task Force found that in 'dry' communities spousal assault also occurs. It is less often reported for fear of the discovery of the additional crime of contravening the community's alcohol laws. In some 'dry' communities, violence as a result of alcohol was common because alcohol was illegally brewed in the community.

Alcohol and drug abuse committees have developed programs relating to victims and abusers. The Director of Tuvvik Alcohol Counselling Centre in

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Frobisher Bay has researched the relationship between alcohol and spousal assault and is instituting counselling programs. In Cambridge Bay, the Katimavik Centre operates an alcohol and drug abuse program which has facilities for victims of alcohol abusers. They have a follow-up program of counselling for victims and bs. Other alcohol committees have taken similar steps relating to use of alcohol and spousal assault. In some Baffin communities, there are alcohol committees which have authority to interdict or ration the purchase of alcohol by individuals who are resident in that community. They may use this authority to prohibit or restrict batterers in their use of liquor in the community. These committees also monitor alcohol consumption and abuse in their communities.

Whether alcohol is a cause or a catalyst, it is evident to the Task Force that community alcohol groups have chosen to treat the problems together and it appears to be an accepted initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that committees and groups with the objective of alcohol and drug education and counselling be recognized and fully supported in their efforts;
- that alcohol committees with the authority to do so should monitor the use of alcohol by batterers;
- that the relationship between alcohol and drug abuse and the incidence of spousal assault be highlighted in education and community awareness programs;
- that there be interaction between alcohol committees, community groups and professionals for a comprehensive approach to the problem of spousal assault and alcohol abuse.

In dry communities, unfortunately, the illegal transportation of liquor is often a problem. We cannot presume that spousal assault is not aggravated by alcohol abuse in these dry communities.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that there be continued surveillance of the illegal transportation of alcohol into 'dry' communities and that action be taken to provide alcohol control through the establishment of alcohol committees having authority to enforce the regulations in these communities.

3.9 MEDIA APPROACH

Developing community awareness about spousal assault has been one of the objectives of the Task Force. A surprising number of victims were unaware that being beaten was not a normal part of life. Batterers have said that beating their spouses was their right. At a public meeting this right to batter was called 'a natural trait'.

The Task Force believes that with the increase of public awareness and continued media coverage, the public is becoming better informed and more sensitive to the fact that spousal assault is unacceptable. Constant reminders are now necessary to ensure that the public interest and awareness is maintained.

Operators of community radio stations showed their interest in spousal assault by arranging phone-in programs to facilitate discussion of spousal assault issues in their communities. The community has direct access to community radio outlets and should be encouraged to make use of these broadcasting facilities. Individuals, committees, groups and professionals benefit from the exchange of ideas. Community radio can be used as a means of stimulating dialogue and discussion in native languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that individuals, groups and professionals make use of the locally operated community radio stations to discuss the problems of spousal assault.

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People in the north watch a lot of television. Many are unemployed and spend much time at home. There is a television set in virtually every household. Time has already been generously provided on both networks to extend the reach of the Task Force into many communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the CBC Northern Service and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation be encouraged to continue to present programs on spousal assault. These could be panel discussion programs, phone-in shows, coverage of seminars, presentations of plays and other programs for radio and television.

Newspaper articles on spousal assault and coverage of meetings held by the Task Force have been extensive and helped to stimulate interest in the subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the print media be kept informed about developments in the prevention of spousal assault, the needs of victims and other information of the subject so that the public can be kept aware of spousal assault;
- that a full media campaign be launched using the newspapers, audio-visual techniques, radio and television and other media methods to continue keeping the subject of spousal assault before the public. Some of the methods used should include:
 - * use of promotional spots in several northern languages to be shown and broadcast on Anik Info, CBC Northern Services and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation;

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- * development and presentation of dramas on spousal assault in English and native languages for television;
 - * preparation and distribution of booklets and pamphlets;
 - * preparation and distribution of posters and buttons.
- that information kits containing discussion outlines, reference material and other information be prepared and distributed to schools and churches, municipal and band councils and other groups and committees to ensure continuing discussion on spousal assault.

Chapter 4

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force has assembled valuable published material which could be catalogued and made available to those interested in implementing recommendations and doing further research into spousal assault.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Government of the Northwest Territories catalogue and make available the published materials collected by the Task Force.

The Task Force has done much work on spousal assault, but more is needed. Knowing about initiatives from the N.W.T. and other parts of the world will help people to address the problems, benefiting from the experiences of others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Government of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly allocate sufficient resources so that information can be collected, catalogued and distributed to individuals and groups on request;
- that the Government of the Northwest Territories use its computer facilities to post notice board information throughout North America

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and to collect information for the use of northern agencies, groups and individuals interested in spousal assault.

The Task Force has made recommendations to the Ministerial Committee, the Minister and the Legislative Assembly. If they are adopted, many will require months or years to implement. The Ministerial Committee could continue to play an important role, particularly if its membership were more representative of concerned community groups and other organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- that the Ministerial Committee remain in existence and act as an interagency policy committee to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations made in this report;
- that the Ministerial committee be responsible for the preparation of an annual report on the implementation of the Spousal Assault Task Force recommendations under the direction of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women;
- that the Legislative Assembly consider a status report from the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to be tabled annually for the next 3 years to inform the Legislative Assembly and the public whether recommendations have or have not been successfully implemented.

Chapter 5

WHAT WAS SAID

Task Force members spoke to hundreds of people and had many public and private meetings. From our notes we provide a sample of the comments and remarks made to us. Our recommendations are a synthesis of much of what we were told. This chapter is a representative selection of the contributions to our work.

5.1 COMMENTS

1. Training for social workers should be available at Thebacha College at more than statutory level for family counselling.
2. Day care policy to be revised to enable battered spouses to obtain priority affordable or free day care during and after crisis.
3. Review directive to RCMP to levy charges in all reported cases of spousal assault. It is not being adhered to in all cases anyway.
4. In service training to deal with spousal assault situations.
5. Equalize property rights within marriage.
6. Would a community court committee be more effective in dealing with spousal assaults than present courts.
7. Those sentenced for spousal assault should serve sentence in community wherever possible.
8. Cross cultural training to understand family dynamics in other cultures.
9. Female judges for the North.
10. Professionals (nurses, RCMP) do not stay in communities long enough to

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get to really know the people and their problems. Should postings be longer?

11. Educate the coming generation. It may already be too late for this one which is grown up now.
12. Education - posters, bumper stickers, "It's not macho to beat your wife."
13. Must consider children as victims of spousal assault even when they are not physically assaulted and provide comfort and counselling.
14. Spousal assault is a community problem. Solutions have to be made in the community.
15. Batterers should have longer sentences and be forced to take counselling.
16. Use those who have been through spousal assault as a community resource. They can help others and help themselves at the same time.
17. At the very least the woman who has been through it becomes a listener even if her problems are not as serious or not too similar. Encourage her to help others.
18. Sometimes we in the community give too much advice to the victim. She has to make the decisions essentially alone. Let her talk it out without being pressured with too much good advice.
19. Look for signs of spousal assault in the children. Often there is a blankness in their look, in their eyes as if they are blocking things out.
20. When women have left with their children, it does not mean they do not need a break from them. They do desperately. Day care and volunteer babysitters are very important.
21. A crisis centre or shelter should have a revenue component. It builds confidence, acts as therapy and teaches business skills and money management. (examples are B.W. Jeans (Dakotas) and Tropical Plant sales (Hawaii))
22. When men come to the centre as they sometimes do to tell their side of the story, the opportunity to provide counselling and referral should not be lost.
23. Agency information is collected but not in ways which facilitate statistical analysis.

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24. We have to determine with people from outlying communities what is the appropriate solution for them.
25. Information has to be made available in native languages.
26. We must educate people that spousal assault is not acceptable.
27. Churches and ministers have a role to play and should be encouraged to play it.
28. Information has to be put into a useable form and format. Not everyone can read.
29. A list of community contact people would create a valuable communications and resource network.
30. Where housing alternatives do not exist, where existing houses are overcrowded, the victim of spousal assault has no option but to stay in her situation.
31. We need counselling for native and white people.
32. We need a shelter as much for the safety and care of children as for the victims.
33. We need mental health counsellors. We must look into the fact that violence is increasingly part of the northern way of life.
34. Spousal assault has to be addressed in the wider context of family violence.
35. We have to be able to provide shelter to victims.
36. Elders should be involved in counselling those who batter their spouses.
37. The treatment of batterers should take place pursuant to the order of the court.
38. There ought to be counselling and therapy in the prisons for those convicted of spousal assault. Nothing available in Frobisher Bay or in Yellowknife.
39. Community professionals (social workers, counsellors) could initiate spousal assault counselling by giving talks or seminars which could be followed up by individual or group therapy and counselling.
40. There should be an anti spousal assault campaign like the anti-alcohol campaign in the Alberta media.

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41. Prosecutors should only agree to withdraw charges in exceptional circumstances.
42. Prosecutors should seek sentences which reflect the seriousness of the assault.
43. A reporting system is required to keep statistics which will facilitate measuring the effectiveness of the justice system.
44. Research may be required to determine and tailor action to suit particular communities.
45. Protocols must be developed within and between agencies to facilitate reliable cooperation and follow up.
46. More crisis centers and transition facilities. Operators will need training, back up and support services.
47. Social workers, police, courts require a clearer mandate to intervene.
48. The option of treatment "centres" for batterers should be investigated.
49. Treatment for batterers should be available on request as well as through the court and probation services.
50. Public awareness and education should stress prevention.
51. Public awareness and education programs should be directed to the general public, students, parents, the media, health care professionals and community action groups.
52. Training programs should be prepared with components for professionals and volunteers.
53. Need for comprehensive training is greatest in outlying communities where there is less professional back up assistance.
54. Mature counsellors are urgently needed in the small predominately native communities. Respected community elders should be encouraged to take on these roles and where necessary, trained to handle spousal assault problems and informed of the law.
55. Law enforcement officers and social workers should be aware that where sexual abuse of children is discovered, there is a high probability of spousal assault which ought to be investigated.

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56. I would like to see a decriminalization of spousal assault.
57. Data gathering could be made easy by minor adjustment to intake forms (social services).
58. Policing policy which has changed from discretionary charging to mandatory charging to (unofficial) discretionary charging must be assessed.
59. Cultural context in which spousal assault takes place must be considered as a factor in laying charges.
60. Cultural context is and should not be taken into account by policy in determining conditions precedent to responding to complaint.
61. Police work should not end at investigation of crime and charging appropriate social agency.
62. Racial or cultural background should not be a factor which affects the immediacy of police response to a call for assistance in a spousal assault complaint.
63. Professionals must understand public reaction (or lack of it) to spousal assault in native society so that the wrong conclusions are not drawn.
64. The schools should begin to educate children at the early stages regarding family relationships and should reinforce criticism of spousal assault and other family violence.
65. Community action groups should be encouraged to start small and build so they do not briefly raise the hopes of those who need them before disappearing and leaving those expectations dashed.
66. Training for those who are to do the important jobs of intervention and counselling must be proper and in depth. No Mickey Mouse training programs, please.
67. The Chief and Band Council should take a greater part in publicly criticizing spousal assault.
68. A man who beats his wife should have to appear before the Chief and Band Council to explain what he did and should have to accept the criticism given. That kind of pressure might make them think about it the next time.
69. The band needs to confront spousal assault problems. We should hold a workshop so band members can examine ways they can show care and concern for its members which it is avoiding now.

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70. Respected elders must play a role in advising people about their behaviour to one another.
71. In a crisis centre you have to provide security for victims but you also have to facilitate communication between the crisis centre and the batterer, the victim and the batterer and the victim and the community.
72. The children of victims are themselves victims. Their needs, although different from those of their mothers, have to be provided for. They are often upset, hyperactive, confused and destructive.
73. If a crisis centre is worth having, the community must show this by providing volunteer labour, toys, clothing and funds.
74. In supporting crisis centres, municipalities could provide free water and sewer services.
75. We have to be concerned about batterers because they often go through relationships with a series of spouses leaving ruined homes, battered wives and bewildered and maladjusted children behind them.
76. Professionals who seldom if ever get together to discuss spousal assault should do so regularly.
77. Some social workers must be freed from their other casework to do long term professional counselling to couples, victims and batterers.
78. No spousal assault should be viewed as minor.
79. Shelters should be secure, have adequate staffing, be properly funded on a long term basis.
80. When victims have to talk, someone has to listen, no matter what the hour or what else has to be done.
81. Family and individual counselling cannot just be left until the late evening and weekends when the rest of the day's social work has been done.
82. Victims should be encouraged to pursue charges on the first complaint to show they are serious.
83. Victims need to know what their legal rights are and what they can do. This should be distributed in newspapers and at bingos and other events to which many people go.
84. There is a need for anonymous crisis intervention for those mainly

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non-native victims who are afraid to ask for help because of their prestigious position in the community.

85. Former victims are a valuable community resources and should not be overlooked as potential counsellors.
86. Statistics may indicate more spousal assault among native couples, but non-native victims are less likely to report such incidents to police and social workers.
87. Families which shelter others are often concerned about their own safety.
88. Although it is often easier to remove a victim or advise a victim to leave the home or village, police should make every effort to remove batterers and use available legal tools to protect the victim and family in their homes.
89. Need ways to bring batterers and those who threaten to batter into psychological assessment and counselling before a serious assault occurs not after.
90. Professionals must learn what is available from others in the community. They must not assume that help is available elsewhere.
91. Assumptions of what a victim should know about helping agencies cannot be made. Victims often know next to nothing about aid available and are seldom in a position to go looking or enquiring for it.
92. We must find ways to help victims to stand on their own with an improved self-image or they will continue to be victimized in subsequent relationships.
93. A radio phone-in series to widen public discussion.
94. The assistance and support of settlement and hamlet councils is necessary to help spousal assault initiatives succeed.
95. Alcohol centres should be prepared to deal with spousal assault issues since many victims and some batterers go to such centres for comfort and counselling.
96. Couples with marriage problems heap mental abuse on one another. They need help in the form of counselling to keep this abuse to a minimum and to prevent its becoming physical.
97. Prosecutors have to be innovative with use of criminal charges and may be able to use the laying of (but not proceeding with) a charge to persuade a couple to try counselling.

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98. Church ministers should be encouraged by their parishioner to raise spousal assault and other family violence issues in their sermons and moral teachings.
99. Community service agencies, the churches and educators must exchange information and coordinate their efforts to assist victims and their families.
100. Need definition of spousal assault so no doubt what we are talking about. (See Family violence protocol manual, Association of Social Workers)
101. Our Child Welfare Ordinance should be amended to state clearly that children who witness spousal assault are in need of protection.
102. Police as well as crown attorneys should keep records and stats on cases not proceeded with and why.
103. Court should not be so public for spousal assault matters.
104. Social services to victims and batterers should be a community responsibility.
105. More promotion on TV and radio for public awareness. Open line programs.
106. Counselling must be available to people in their own language.
107. Band members should force their councillors to deal at their meetings with problems of spousal assault because in the old days when Chief and Band council intervened, it was very effective.
108. When we watch videos with our boyfriends, they want to take us and do to us what they have seen.
109. Women should be informed about human rights.
110. It would be helpful if a person could be chosen within the community to visit families with problems.
111. There is a need for the whole community to discuss the problem of spousal assault.
112. Charges should not be laid until both sides of the story are heard.
113. Shelters would not increase the divorce rates but would protect victims while offering counselling and other services.

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114. People are becoming too dependent on institutions as a result, as a result native parents are neglecting their responsibilities.
115. Native associations should have a seminar with elders and young people to talk about marriage relationships.
116. Elders should set new standards of morality which are compatible with changing society.
117. The batterer and victim should be brought before a tribunal composed of community leaders for decisions on how to resolve the problem. If there is no solution, the care should be turned over to the RCMP.
118. Putting people in jail is not the answer; other solutions must be found. The Task Force should seek ways of helping instead of punishing.
119. Safe houses should be supported financially by the community and not seen as a government project.
120. There are extraordinary pressures in mixed marriages which often result in spousal assault.
121. National Health and Welfare should set up a unit for mental health education.
122. Native people should be trained for the role of counsellors instead of a professional from the south.
123. If women are hit for an unknown reason, it hurts more than if she knew why she was being beaten.
124. A network of designated safe houses within the community so that family contact could be kept intact.
125. Problems tend to accumulate in a man with no support network.
126. The root causes of spousal assault are alcohol and "bedroom gymnastics."
127. There is a need for an alcohol committee to control the flow of liquor into the community and to educate people on the ills of alcohol abuse.
128. As there is a pattern of male chauvinism, there is a need to educate people about the rights of women.
129. Adolescence may be too late to reverse ingrained attitudes on spousal assault.

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130. Young women need assertive training which would teach them they must stand up for themselves and develop self-esteem.
131. The people should be more concerned with developing and strengthening native organizations to handle family and social problems than they are with oil and gas exploration.
132. If funding is available from the government for business development, why are funds not available to ease the plight of the people.
133. There should be a committee formed for spousal assault counselling but made up of non-batterers.
134. We should encourage people to produce plays, videos, docu-dramas on the subject for presentation to community groups and schools.
135. "Men have feelings too - sometimes all I can think about is suicide."
136. Social workers are often intimidated by victims and batterers as well as their family members and friends.
137. An old man said, "In the old days there were lots of beating and I don't want to see it continue. I suggest they leave their husbands."
138. I suggest a by-law where people choose counsellors through a referendum or elections like they do with education committees.
139. These problems will get worse because of the high birthrate in the north.
140. I get high blood pressure when victims come to my house for shelter.
141. We have manuals for snowmobiles. There is also a manual for life - the Bible, which we have learned.
142. We need more recreational facilities for men, like hockey rinks and boxing punching bags so that we have a place to relieve our tensions instead of punching our wives.
143. 1985 is the International Year of Youth. We should be able to take advantage of that to assist young people who have witnessed spousal assault and are troubled and influenced by it.

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Chapter 6
CONCLUSION

This report is submitted for discussion and debate. It is not in final form. It has yet to be translated into the aboriginal languages and there are certain things the Task Force did not discuss.

The Task Force wanted to submit the report before the end of the 1984-1985 fiscal year so that it might assist program and financial planners and in hopes that recommendations could be implemented in 1985-1986.

The report is as yet incomplete. Acknowledgments, appendices, references and written submissions to the Task Force have not at this stage been included. We plan to complete these tasks by May 1985 in time for the next session of the Legislative Assembly to be held in Rankin Inlet.

In the meantime, comments and reactions from the public and from government agencies would be welcomed.

