

# **Report of the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee**

Submitted to

The Deputy Ministers'  
Leadership Committee on  
Family Violence

June 30, 2009

Halifax, Nova Scotia

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## **Acknowledgments**

The Co-chairs of the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee (DVPC) would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the organizations and government departments represented on our committee, who invested significant time, commitment and expertise to this report.

The DVPC gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the key informants who participated in groups, provided insight and recommendations, and who demonstrated their continuing hope for a new commitment to ending domestic violence.

## Introduction

Domestic violence is not a private matter. All Nova Scotians are affected by domestic violence and all have a role in ending it.

In decades of dealing with the effects of domestic violence in Nova Scotia, many tools, programs and services have been created to address the needs of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. These programs and services have been supported by both government and community. What has been lacking is an approach that coordinates them to create the continuum of care and support needed to allow those who are affected to make real changes in their lives.

In June of 2008, the Ministers of Justice and Community Services created the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee (DVPC,) that included representatives from government departments and agencies, and community organizations. Our mandate was to *“make recommendations to the Deputy Ministers’ Leadership Committee on Family Violence regarding the development of a Domestic Violence Strategy for the Province.”* Specifically, we were directed by the Ministers to develop recommendations in the following areas: Services for Victims, Prevention and Public Education, Interventions for Abusers, and Judicial and Legislative Responses.

For the purpose of our work, we used the following definition of domestic violence:  
*Domestic Violence is deliberate and purposeful violence, abuse and intimidation perpetrated by one person against another in an intimate relationship. It occurs between two persons where one has power over the other, causing fear, physical and/or psychological harm. It may be a single act or a series of acts forming a pattern of abuse. Domestic violence can occur in any relationship, however, women are primarily the victims and men are primarily the perpetrators. Children and young people may experience harm by being exposed to violence in adult relationships, being the direct victims of violence, or a combination of the two.*

We developed a vision : *“All persons in Nova Scotia live free from domestic violence and abuse.”* We also adopted a model for making decisions by consensus and worked together to develop recommendations for a Domestic Violence Strategy for Nova Scotia.

*An estimated 21,000 Nova Scotian women were victims of domestic violence between 1999 and 2004.*

Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004, 1999; Violence Against Women Survey

Committee members worked to keep the focus on our belief that there is no place for domestic violence in the lives of Nova Scotians. The commitment of time, expertise, and a collaborative way of working among multi-sectoral committee members has produced strong recommendations. We also created opportunities to hear from diverse voices in Nova Scotia<sup>1</sup>.

The recommendations reflect the overarching themes of being inclusive of the experience of Nova Scotians in all their diversity, and using the strength that comes from collaboration between government and community. It is the hope of the DVPC and our advice that the same themes that guided our work should also guide those who create a Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy for the province of Nova Scotia.

*A third of all incidents of spousal violence in Canada (approximately 394,000 cases between 1999 and 2004) were witnessed by children.*

Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004, 1999; Violence Against Women Survey

Social prosperity for Nova Scotia will require that approaches to domestic violence are firmly linked to other social policy work and strategies of government. Some examples include: strategies related to poverty reduction, crime prevention, suicide prevention, child and youth, addictions, and sustainable transportation.

We recognize that words have weight and power. We have used terms such as “victim” and “abuser” because they were in the original mandate given to the committee. We support the exploration of alternate language that recognizes that people who experience violence, and people who perpetrate violence, are whole people with complex circumstances, histories and needs. They are more than the terms we use to describe them in the context of our recommendations.

It is our hope that the recommendations in this report will contribute to solutions to domestic violence that will serve and protect all Nova Scotians.

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<sup>1</sup>Key informants included Acadian women, African Nova Scotian women, women with disabilities, rural women, women who experience the criminal justice system, immigrant women and Aboriginal women.

## Recommendations

### A) Overarching recommendations

*The following overarching recommendations apply to each and every subsequent recommendation.*

Develop, in collaboration with the community, a domestic violence prevention strategy for Nova Scotia that is based on the recommendations made by the DVPC.

Make the safety of victims the most important consideration.

Make collaboration between government and community the standard practice. Collaboration draws on the expertise of both.

Work from a shared vision for community and government for a Nova Scotia where all persons *“live free from domestic violence and abuse.”*

Support this vision by creating formal protocols and working with joint working groups. Develop outcomes and frameworks for evaluation by working with those who provide services and those who use them, making sure they are appropriate and measurable.

Build on services by working with ideas from other programs, approaches, and strategies that work well, in Nova Scotia and elsewhere. Base the approach to domestic violence on research and evidence.

Ensure that new and existing programs and supports honour the diversity – gender, race, ethnicity, social and economic status, age, sexual orientation, language, special needs, being in school or out - of the people who need them. This requires both cultural competence and cultural relevance.

Create policies and supports that direct people to develop behaviours, attitudes, approaches and skills that build their effectiveness in cross-cultural situations.

## **B) General recommendations**

Create, enhance and sustain services for identifying and addressing domestic violence in the early stages. Make early identification and referral part of a continuum of services for both victims and abusers.

Increase capacity to respond to victims of domestic violence. Train health professionals and other first responders, such as 911 operators and volunteer fire fighters, to identify and support victims of domestic violence. Train other direct service providers (e.g. providers of supported employment, residential care facilities, etc.) to screen for domestic violence, and to provide sensitive and appropriate referrals and support.

Ensure that provincial and municipal police agencies commit to domestic violence training on an on-going basis. This could include coaching in addition to formalized training sessions, to ensure that there is no gap in access to trained and supportive police champions in communities.

Support those working on the front lines with children, such as child-protection workers, community staff who work with children from abusive relationships, and child-care providers, by providing them with additional and ongoing training and opportunities to collaborate.

Provide victims and abusers access to all types of health services when and where they need them.

Invest in the facilities that provide domestic violence services, and make these places more secure, more accessible, and more energy efficient.

Develop a framework for applied research through government and community groups to examine issues relating to domestic violence in the province, that include:

- the role of alcohol and other drug use/abuse as a contributing factor in domestic violence
- the cost of domestic violence in the provincial economy
- the role that children's advocates could play in Nova Scotia.
- the exploration of why sexual violence is under-reported in cases of domestic violence

- the effectiveness of public education campaigns
- the availability of legal aid services to victims of domestic violence
- effective methodologies for men's intervention programs
- violence perpetrated in same sex relationships and on transgendered individuals, to understand their unique needs for prevention and supports
- new ways to screen for domestic violence
- new ways to connect with and serve those who do not use existing services – such as women reluctant to report incidents of domestic violence, male victims and transgendered individuals.

Review and strengthen systems for collecting data to determine the potential for enhanced analysis and evaluation (e.g. the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System and the General Social Survey, Violence Against Women Survey from Statistics Canada.) An example would be tracking the incidence of sexual violence in domestic violence situations.

Promote and facilitate the collection of information and statistics that will enhance understanding of, and the response to, domestic violence in diverse communities.

Build capacity in the domestic violence sector, including both government and community service providers, to promote employment equity and the inclusion of diverse groups in the staffing of these organizations.

Build capacity to provide French language services to victims and abusers, and to provide safe and welcoming environments for Nova Scotians from all backgrounds.

Information and services should be available in languages other than English, when needed. This could include working with diverse communities to identify and explore options about how to meet their needs for shelter for victims.

Facilitate linkages between governments (provincial, federal and First Nation) and Aboriginal organizations so that the needs of Aboriginal people experiencing domestic violence can be addressed through timely and effective programs and services.



### C) Services for Victims

Support all victims, whether they live in rural or urban areas, with access to a continuum of domestic violence services that includes:

- a transition house with professionally trained staff, on duty at all times
- second-stage housing with ongoing counseling support
- access to crisis services by phone
- crisis-response services
- counseling and support for children with follow-up and outreach programs that are available for at least two years
- extended supervised access visit and exchange programs
- outreach that is delivered by both community-run and government-run programs
- community organizations that support women and their families, such as women's centres, family resource centres, sexual assault centres and other services
- services that are coordinated for victims whose cases are designated as high risk
- accessible services for victims with disabilities (e.g. safety planning tools that build on existing emergency planning preparedness for persons with a disability, or interpretation for victims who are non-verbal)
- qualified interpreters for language and culture
- support of holistic models of service delivery, particular to the Aboriginal community
- services that can identify domestic violence in early stages

Recognize the web of social supports that are required to support victims and help them stay safe, such as housing, transportation, income, childcare and education. These supports should include the following:

- housing in both rural and urban communities that is affordable and safe. Create second-stage, third-stage, and independent housing with supports. Explore ways to provide off-reserve second and third stage housing for Aboriginal victims.
- programs for parents in life skills and parenting
- programs in life goal planning
- support services to help victims upgrade their education, prepare for work and move into a career
- personal supports and services for women with disabilities to maintain their ability to parent and participate in the community
- replacement of assistive devices damaged or lost through domestic violence

- access to transportation
- access to dental care
- access to affordable childcare

Create community-based navigator positions to support victims who are accessing a variety of systems (for example: employment supports, income assistance, housing, health) that support their move away from abusive relationships.

Increase awareness of how domestic violence impacts parenting, and work with parents who are victims to ensure safety and enhanced outcomes for children.

Create supports for victims whose children have been taken into care under the *Children and Family Services Act*<sup>2</sup>, including training and support to develop positive ways of parenting, and services that support the parent if a child is taken into permanent care.

Develop provincial standards, guidelines, safety planning, referral and monitoring procedures for a victim-centred and comprehensive response to domestic violence in emergency rooms and primary care settings.

Consistently apply and monitor screening tools in public health and primary care settings.

Review how jurisdictional mandates and responsibilities create additional barriers for Aboriginal victims seeking services.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 22.2.i of the *Children and Family Services Act* states: "A child is in need of protective services where (I) the child has suffered physical or emotional harm caused by being exposed to repeated domestic violence by or towards a parent or guardian of the child, and the child's parent or guardian fails or refuses to obtain services or treatment to remedy or alleviate the violence..."

## **D) Prevention and Public Education**

### **i) Prevention**

Create and sustain primary prevention programs aimed at preventing domestic violence. These programs should be available to people starting with early childhood and continuing across the life span. These programs should recognize and reflect the social determinants of health, including gender, poverty, employment and inequality.

Promote collaborative partnerships among government agencies, government departments and community-based agencies with expertise in domestic violence and prevention and intervention.

Integrate and coordinate domestic violence prevention initiatives across government, including health promotion services, early intervention and childcare services and primary health care services.

Develop and sustain programs and resources, in collaboration with early childhood educators and others who work with young children, aimed at educating young children about healthy relationships.

Partner with youth (both in and out of school) to develop innovative, youth-centred approaches to domestic violence prevention, dating violence, sexual assault, harassment and the promotion of healthy relationships.

Work with Youth Health Centres, Health Promoting School teams, Mi'kmaq Liaison Office, African Canadian Services, Nova Scotia School Boards Association and Police Liaison School Services to support healthy relationship programming and a positive, safe school climate.

Support public and First Nation school systems in addressing domestic violence education, in particular:

- support the delivery of programming to ensure that healthy relationships and domestic violence are addressed effectively as part of Health Education (P- gr.6) and Healthy Living (gr. 7-9) curricula currently being revised, and in appropriate high school curricula.

- explore effective evidence-informed, culturally relevant and strengths-based domestic violence prevention initiatives for public schools.
- encourage opportunities for gender specific programming regarding violence in relationships.
- review pre-service teacher education programs and in-service training for teachers, guidance counselors, and other school based staff, to include awareness of domestic violence identification, prevention and referral.

## **ii) Public education (outside of the school system)**

Create tools and resources for friends, neighbours, faith communities and families to support women and children who are experiencing domestic violence.

Support Aboriginal and other diverse communities in the development of programs that deal with prevention of domestic violence. Offer this support in a holistic way that is relevant to their culture.

Inform Aboriginal people (both on and off reserve), and other diverse communities about the domestic violence services available.

Invest in community organizations so that they can develop programs and projects that deal with the prevention of domestic violence. Include funding to evaluate the programs, and long-term funding to support programs that are successful.

Make legal information on rights and responsibilities available to immigrants, at point of entry, in languages other than English, as needed.

Explore how a social marketing campaign could be useful in changing attitudes and behaviours, and especially in reaching diverse communities about issues of domestic violence. Any campaign should include the messages that:

- anyone can experience domestic violence
- domestic violence, in all its forms, is unacceptable
- sexual violence in intimate partner relationships is a crime

- men have a responsibility in ending violence against women, including the promotion of positive male role models
- there are supports for victims to move forward from domestic violence

*Key informants identified the need to involve and celebrate positive role models from the African Nova Scotian, Aboriginal and immigrant communities.*

Encourage adult education programs, schools, universities, and other institutions that offer education and training, to add training about domestic violence to their curricula.

Host conferences and workshops for practitioners in the field of domestic violence and develop a network to help them share new and innovative approaches and practices that look promising for addressing domestic violence.

### **E) Interventions for abusers**

Ensure that programs for men who are abusive and controlling in intimate partner relationships hold them accountable and support them to move towards respectful and non-violent relationships.

Build on services that exist, and explore new ways of working, to create a continuum of programs and services for abusers. These services should be accessible, culturally relevant and culturally competent, and include:

- men's intervention programs with professionally trained staff, delivering programs based on provincial standards
- services for early intervention, with enhanced screening tools
- parenting programs aimed at fathers
- programs that offer support and counseling for partners, including safety planning
- programs and services that offer ongoing support

Provide support and mentoring programs through the appropriate agencies in the community for male children and youth who are starting to behave in abusive ways.

Provide programs and follow-up services for abusers that address concerns other than their abusive behaviour, such as the impact of racism, and needs such as education, housing, transportation, health, and literacy. Recognize that supporting the abuser to change behaviour assists in keeping victims safe.

## F) Judicial and Legislative Responses

Adopt a specialized domestic violence court program, at the justice centre level, and include programs and services that support the judicial process. Move towards a model that integrates family and criminal court processes. Develop and implement a specialized court program that will:

- make the safety of women and children the top priority
- ensure integration and coordination between the criminal and family court systems
- collaborate with community organizations, to include the implementation, operation and review of the specialized domestic violence court program
- report the progress of this program so that it can be evaluated
- provide qualified interpreters and materials, when needed, to meet the language needs of victims and perpetrators
- collaborate with First Nation communities and other diverse communities to make sure these court services are appropriate
- train all staff working in the domestic violence court program on appropriate interventions and the dynamics of domestic violence
- include enhanced judicial education opportunities on domestic violence.

Increase the support for victims who go through the court system to include these services

- community-based court advocacy workers to help victims understand and use the legal system
- education on the processes of family court for clients who use this service
- education on the role of lawyers in family court for clients who use this service.

Review the *Children and Family Services Act* to explore how the province meets the best interest of the child in situations of domestic violence. Ensure that direction from child protection workers that contradicts an established court order is provided in writing.

Explore legislative responses to ensure that past history of domestic violence is considered in custody and access cases, particularly in cases that have been designated high-risk for lethality; for example, recent changes to the Province of Ontario Children's Law Reform Act.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90c12\\_e.htm#BK27](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90c12_e.htm#BK27)

Ensure that policies and protocols (e.g. policy related to the exchange of information in child protection cases) relating to domestic violence are consistently applied.

Develop resources, standards, policy, and training to support supervised access for parents and for taking children back and forth between parents.

Amend the *Residential Tenancies Act* to allow a tenant to end their lease without penalty if it is not safe for them to stay in their home because of the risks from domestic violence.<sup>4</sup>

Explore with First Nation communities, and the federal and provincial governments, the use of emergency protection orders on First Nation lands. This should include researching how First Nation communities across Canada are dealing with housing protocols and Band Council by-laws in relation to violence and abuse.

Establish collaborative relationships between police and First Nation service providers so appropriate approaches and protocols are established for dealing with Aboriginal people who experience domestic violence.

Support ongoing initiatives regarding Aboriginal models of restorative justice, First Nation tribunal and specialized court processes (e.g. Gladue), and perpetrator intervention.

Explore ways that the court system recognizes and responds to an abuser who is continuing the abuse by keeping the victim involved in the court system through perpetual litigation and/or where an abuser will use self-representation with the intent to bully the victim.

Explore whether judicial orders relating to “reasonable access” and “no contact” can be made clearer to improve enforcement and prevent further domestic violence.

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<sup>4</sup> See Article 1974.1 of the Civil Code of Quebec. [www.justice.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.justice.gouv.qc.ca)



Term	Definitions
Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence is deliberate and purposeful violence, abuse and intimidation perpetrated by one person against another in an intimate relationship. It occurs between two persons where one has power over the other, causing fear, physical and/or psychological harm. It may be a single act or a series of acts forming a pattern of abuse. Domestic violence can occur in any relationship; however, women are primarily the victims and men are primarily the perpetrators. Children and young people may experience harm by being exposed to violence in adult relationships, being the direct victims of violence, or a combination of the two.
Cultural Competence	Cultural competence refers to the attitudes, knowledge, skills, behaviors, and policies that are needed to meet the needs of all the people we serve. Culture refers to a group or community of people who share the kind of experiences that shape the way its members understand the world. It has many layers of understanding, it changes, and it includes groups that we are born into or choose to be part of, such as national origin, levels of ability, gender, sexual orientation and identity, race or ethnicity, social and economic class, or religion. People have multiple cultures. <i>(NS Department of Health, Primary Health Care)</i>
Cultural Relevance	Cultural relevance involves recognizing, understanding and applying attitudes and practices that are sensitive to and appropriate for people with diverse cultural socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, and persons of all ages, genders, health status, sexual orientations and abilities. Programs and services developed and delivered with little or superficial coverage of cultural variables (beliefs, values, norms and behaviours that capture the core life experiences of racial/ethnic minority people) are likely to be ineffective because such programs are “culturally blind” to important service needs of racial/ethnic minority people. <i>(Faryna &amp; Morales, 2000; Marin et al., 1995; and Cuellar; Arnold &amp; Gonzalez, 1995)</i>
Domestic Violence Intervention	Action taken to stop domestic violence, lessen its effects on the victims and their families, and hold the abuser accountable.
Domestic Violence Prevention	Prevention includes activities and approaches that promote safe, healthy relationships and behaviors. Prevention aims to lower the chances that domestic violence will happen in the first place, or the chances that it will happen again.

Domestic Violence Public Education	Activities that aim to let more people know about the issue of domestic violence, its causes, consequences, and solutions.
Family Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• includes a range of behaviours that are abusive</li> <li>• happens within relationships that are based on blood relationships, intimacy, dependency, or trust</li> <li>• may be one act but more often it is a series of acts that form a pattern of abuse</li> <li>• includes domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse</li> </ul>
Intimate Partner Abuse	<p>Intimate partner abuse can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>physical abuse</i>, which includes an act that is intentional, reckless, or threatened, or something that is not done, that causes injury</li> <li>• <i>sexual assault/abuse</i>, is any unwanted or non-consensual act of a sexual nature. Sexual assault/abuse may range from threats of a sexual nature, to unwanted kissing, unwanted touching, and/or forced penetration of the mouth, vagina, and/or anus. It is an act of control over the victim. It is NOT an act of sexual passion. Sexual assault is a criminal offence.</li> <li>• <i>mental or emotional abuse</i>, which includes making comments that degrade, humiliate, and controll someone, including social isolation from family and friends</li> <li>• <i>spiritual abuse</i>, including preventing a person from participating in activities connected with their faith</li> </ul> <p>Abuse is also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an act that is intentional or reckless, or with-holding a person’s food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, transportation, or other necessities of life</li> <li>• an act that is intentional, reckless, or threatened, or something that is not done that damages property as a way to intimidate someone</li> <li>• actions of any kind that set out to control, exploit, or limit a person's access to financial resources in order to make the person financially dependent</li> <li>• using force to confine someone</li> </ul>
Sexual Violence	An umbrella term that describes the range of assault, abuse, harassment, and other offences of a sexual nature. The term sexual violence is used to demonstrate the criminal nature, level of harm, impact of the power and control, as well as the range of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological trauma, offenses of a sexual nature can cause.

<p>Violence Against Women</p>	<p>Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.</p> <p>Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs. <i>(Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006, Johnson, Holly, Statistics Canada, <a href="http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-570-x/85-570-x2006001-eng.htm">http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-570-x/85-570-x2006001-eng.htm</a>)</i></p>
<p>Determinants of Health</p>	<p>The many factors and conditions in a person's life that have a strong influence on health, such as gender, income and social status, social environments, physical environments, healthy child development, social support networks, education and literacy, employment and conditions at work, and personal coping skills</p>

## Appendices

### i. Domestic Violence Prevention Committee Members

#### DVPC Members

Joanne Bernard, Alice Housing

Debbie Boyd-Crowther, Mi'kmaq Family Healing Centres

Alex Bruce, Department of Education

Natalie Downey, Department of Community Services

Margo Hampton, Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs

Pamela Harrison, Co-chair, Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

Lucille Harper, Women's Centres Connect

Lynn Hartwell, Co-chair, Department of Community Services

Sheri Lecker, Adsum for Women & Children

Farhana Kanth, Department of Health

Wendy Keen, Men's Intervention Programs

Stephanie McInnis Langley, Department of Justice

Marika Lathem, Department of Community Services

Mark Mander, Nova Scotia Association of Police Chiefs

Sue Mercer, Isaak Walton Killam Health Centre

Denise Moore, Office of Aboriginal Affairs

Brigitte Neumann, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Lesley Poirier, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

John Joyce Robinson, Department of Justice

Freda Simon, Mi'kmaq Family Healing Centres

Irene Smith, Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

Lisa Tobin, Department of Health Promotion and Protection

Bob Whitman, Men's Intervention Programs

ii. Guiding Principles

**Domestic Violence Prevention Committee**

**Guiding Principles**

The Domestic Violence Prevention Committee (DVPC,) in fulfilling its mandate to “make recommendations to the Deputy Minister’s Leadership Committee regarding the development of a Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy for the Province,” has adopted Guiding Principles for its work:

The DVPC:

- Recognizes that although Domestic Violence can occur within any intimate relationship, women and children are predominately the victims, while men are predominately the perpetrators
  
- Commits to respecting differences while working to achieve common goals
  
- Will make recommendations that are inspiring, comprehensive and holistic, and challenge all Nova Scotians to create a province that is safe and free from Domestic Violence
  
- Will make recommendations that are inclusive of Nova Scotia residents’ experience, needs, diversity and circumstances, in its genesis and framework, and are relevant to all
  
- Will take a coordinated approach that includes a continuum of responses, programs and services, recognizing that the earlier the intervention the more positive the outcome
  
- Will articulate clear linkages to social policy and relevant frameworks
  
- Will make recommendations consistent with the Nova Scotia Community Development Policy

iii Ground Rules

**Domestic Violence Prevention Committee  
Ground Rules for Participants**

We agree to the following ways of working;

- to respectfully disagree.
- to send alternates( we will understand exceptions)
- that conversation remain confidential and de-personalized
- to respect a scent free environment.
- that cell phones & Blackberrys are off (on call/vibrate)
- that communication about the work of the committee is agreed upon, that participants not speak on behalf of committee
- to the careful use of acronyms
- to be hard on issues, not on people.
- to be respectful.
- to make room for everyone's voice( speaker's list, check-ins from co-chairs)
- that meeting notes will reflect decisions, tasks and action items only
- that decisions will be made using the Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy (FemJEPP) Modified Consensus Model

iv The FemJEPP Model of Modified Consensus Decision Making

### Consensus Model of Decision

This means that representatives will “seek agreement” among themselves after a full discussion and consideration of varying views on a given issue/topic or strategy approach.

The steps to support consensus are as follows:

1. The Co-Chairs/facilitators will do a round of the representatives present to establish if agreement has been reached.
2. It will begin by articulating the decision - “We have agreed to...”
3. Silence is not to be presumed, as ‘agreement,’ so must be conscience of getting verbal agreement in doing the round of all representatives present.

*If consensus/agreement cannot be reached:*

1. Negotiate – have further discussions/consideration of the varying views
2. Following this further discussion, poll the representatives again to see if an agreement can be reached.

*If consensus/agreement still cannot be reached:*

**If the decision can be tabled, table it until the next meeting and efforts can be made for gathering more information on the varying views to help with the decision at the next meeting – if at the next meeting, a decision can still not be reached, then look at alternative ways to resolve – e.g. outside facilitation, mediation, etc. If the decision cannot be tabled, the decision goes to a vote of the representatives present. 75% of the attending representatives are required to carry the vote.**

**Note:** Should a decision be moved to the next meeting, and some of the representatives or their alternates cannot attend (either in person or by videoconferencing), they can send their input to the Co-Chairs electronically to be tabled on their behalf during the discussions at the next meeting. However, those absent from the meeting cannot “block” a vote conducted among the representatives at the meeting when the vote is taken to establish a decision.