



Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention Activities Overview 2009-2010



Premier Robert Ghiz (left) is joined by Dr. Philip Smith, Chair of PAC (right), signing the declaration of 2010 Family Violence Prevention Week.



Dr. Philip Smith
PAC Chairperson

Dr. Philip Smith is Professor of Psychology at the University of Prince Edward Island, where he teaches courses in introductory psychology, statistics and research design, and child development, and advises honours students conducting research in family violence prevention. He served as President of the PEI Transition House Association in the late 1980s and was a member of the Advisory Council to the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women in the 1990s. Dr. Smith and his wife Cathy Morgan live in Stratford with their children Alexandra and Elijah.

The Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention (PAC) was first established in 1995 with a five-year mandate by former Premier Catherine Callbeck. PAC's mandate is to provide education and awareness about family violence prevention and to implement and promote a provincial Family Violence Prevention Strategy.

PAC was renewed for a second five-year term in 2001 by former Premier Pat Binns and a Five-Year Strategy for Family Violence Prevention, based on extensive community consultation, was developed to guide prevention activities in the province. In April 2009 Premier Robert Ghiz renewed PAC with a five-year mandate through spring 2014.

PAC includes representatives of government departments, community advocates, crisis and outreach workers, and representatives of legal, medical, and law enforcement circles to ensure diversity and collective responsibility for family violence prevention. PAC has been recognized nationally as a model of best practice for community involvement.

Message from PAC Chairperson

Member organizations of PAC have sent a knowledgeable, skilled, and dedicated group of representatives to the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention. Members come with diverse experiences. Some have made family violence prevention the core of their professional lives and a central value in their personal lives for years and for decades. Some come with different primary responsibilities in their work lives, but are determined to build a shared responsibility across the Island community for prevention of family violence at all levels: among the whole population so that relationships of respect, care, and integrity leave no room for violence; among families whose circumstances mean they are at increased risk for violence; among families where violence has occurred, so that the violence is not repeated.

PAC is committed to supporting the core work already underway to ensure that victims of family violence receive appropriate supports. In addition, we have established five priority areas on which we will focus during the first part of our mandate: civil and criminal justice issues, including establishment of a Family Violence Court; establishment of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) system; establishment of a comprehensive, evidence based system for parent education and support; youth engagement in family violence education and promotion of healthy relationships; raising awareness and changing social norms that condone family violence.

PAC invites the collaboration of all Islanders toward our vision, "A society where all individuals are safe, respected, and valued; where any form of violence is unacceptable; and where children, women, and men have opportunities to reach their full potential and contribute to the overall well-being of all families and communities."

Premier's Action Committee
on Family Violence Prevention



Comité d'action du premier ministre
sur la prévention de la violence familiale

PAC Overview

Who is PAC?

PAC is an advisory committee to the Premier with member organizations appointed by Executive Council representing government departments, agencies and community organizations. Committee membership consists of 28 community and government representatives to ensure diversity and collective responsibility for family violence prevention.

What is the structure of PAC?

PAC includes the Committee-of-the-Whole that meets quarterly, the PAC Admin Standing Committee that meets between PAC quarterly meetings to carry out the business of PAC, and Ad Hoc Working Groups and Committees, comprised of PAC members as well as other government and community representatives, to carry out activities in PAC priority areas.

PAC is led by the appointed Chair, Dr. Philip Smith, and supported by the Family Violence Prevention and Community Development Coordinator, Dr. Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl, who serves as Resource to PAC. Public Research Intern, Tracy L. Powers, provided additional support.

To ensure optimum member engagement and participation a consensus process is used to make decisions. Consensus decision-making is a process that seeks to arrive at decisions that everyone can abide by, by seeking to resolve or mitigate concerns of the minority.

During the 2009/2010 fiscal year the PAC Committee-of-the-Whole met quarterly in the Premier's Cabinet Room on June 15, September 21, and December 14, 2009, and March 8, 2010.

The PAC Admin Standing Committee met on seven occasions during the 2009-2010 fiscal year.



A society where all individuals are safe, respected and valued; where any form of violence is unacceptable; and where children, women, and men have opportunities to reach their full potential and contribute to the overall well-being of families and communities.

PAC Mandate

The mandate of the committee is to:

- Coordinate the implementation of the provincial Family Violence Prevention Strategy;
- Ensure integrity of community participation is maintained;
- Ensure an evaluation component is in place;
- Develop a work plan;
- Promote the importance of resource allocations necessary for implementation of the strategy; and
- Communicate initiatives to ensure a high public profile for family violence prevention is maintained across the province.



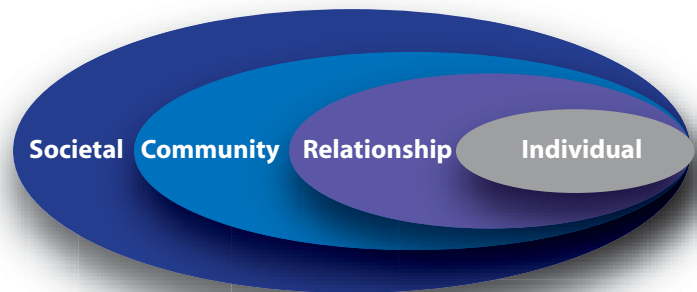
Tracy Powers (Intern) (left) and Dr. Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl (right)

Focus on Prevention

What is meant by Prevention?

Prevention can mean different things to different people. The **Ecological Model of Violence Prevention**¹ describes levels on which PAC aims to focus its prevention activities:

- **Individual Level** concerns biological and personal factors. These factors can increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.
- **Relationship Level** involves a person's friends, partners and family members. These can influence a person's behavior.
- **Community Level** refers to places where social interactions occur including schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods. Characteristics of these places can be associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.
- **Societal Level** means general social factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These factors include social and cultural beliefs as well as the health, economic, educational and social policies.



Prevention activities also include:

- **Universal or Primary Prevention** activities that focus on the general population in order to try to stop violence from occurring in the first place.
- **Selected or Secondary Prevention** activities that focus on people at-risk of experiencing violence, such as those with anger or substance use problems, in order to prevent violence from occurring
- **Indicated or Tertiary Prevention** activities that focus on people who have already experienced violence in order to reduce the trauma and long-term effects, and to break the cycle of violence.

PAC's works to prevent family violence by:

- Increasing **Protective Factors** - These are characteristics in the population that can increase resiliency, increase resistance to risk, and help reduce the likelihood of violence.
- Decreasing **Risk Factors** - These are characteristics in the population that can increase the likelihood of someone experiencing violence.

Research has shown that the most effective violence prevention strategies focus at least some activities at each prevention level.

Over the course of our renewed mandate, PAC will be working to classify our prevention activities by level of prevention and to encourage development and implementation of prevention activities across the levels of prevention with the long term goal of reducing family violence on PEI. PAC will also be working to evaluate the effectiveness of our prevention activities.

¹ For more information on the Ecological Model and levels of prevention see the World Health Organization 2002 World Report on Violence and Health. http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/

PAC AD HOC Working Groups and Committees

Parent Education and Support Working Group (PESWG)

Effective parent education and support has high potential to prevent child abuse and to prevent abusive relationships between parents. These impacts can be immediate and they can be generational. PAC has identified establishment of a comprehensive, evidence-based system of parent education and support as a priority area for action. By comprehensive we mean across the age-span from infancy through adolescence, across the whole Island community, and across the various levels of prevention: universal (the entire population), selective (families with specific risk factors), and indicated (families who already have experienced significant problems in parenting). And, because parenting has influences far beyond family violence prevention alone, we will work with partners from across health, education, community and social service, and justice areas in this collaborative effort. PAC, together with the PEI Children's Secretariat, made plans for a provincial Think Tank for May, 2010, to gather information from a wide range of professionals and advocates about current successes and needs in parent education and support for PEI.

Youth Education Working Group (YEWG)

The YEWG focus is on engaging youth in identification of priority areas for violence prevention and skills-building to promote healthy relationships. The YEWG will be reviewing the results of the 2005 report on consultations with youth on violence prevention, determining the extent to which evidence-based programming has been implemented to address the recommendations of the 2005 report, reviewing current literature on effective programs for violence prevention, and engaging youth in focus groups to determine priority areas and to identify promising programming to increase use of healthy relationship skills and decrease use of unhealthy skills. The goal of the YEWG is to reduce family violence through education and increased use of healthy relationships skills among youth.

Social Marketing Working Group (SMWG)

The SMWG is concentrating efforts on developing and implementing evidence-based strategies to raise awareness of and change social norms condoning family violence. This Working Group will build on the work of the Social Marketing Committee active from 1998-2002.

Civil/Criminal Issues Working Group (CCWG)

The role of the CCWG is to foster work toward establishment of a Family Violence Court on PEI and to coordinate the activities of various committees in the province who are focused on family violence issues in the context of the criminal and civil justice systems.

Work of these various committees include:

- Victims of Family Violence Act Steering Committee - monitors utilization of the Act; and coordinates police training, and training for justices of the peace designated under the Act.;
- Meeting with Justices of the Peace who hear applications as new appointments are made or training is needed;
- Police Supervisors Focus Group, held in the fall each year;
- Police Training on Family Violence Response, held in November each year;
- Linking Criminal/Civil Justice Systems Working Group - focused on information access between the Civil and Criminal justice systems in cases of family violence;
- Family Violence Court Working Group - assessing the feasibility of moving forward with a domestic violence court option for PEI;
- Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee - conference planning, development of publications, and review of the Child Sexual Abuse Protocol;
- Woman Abuse Protocols - ongoing work in updating protocols and developing new protocols; and
- Updating of Police protocol
- Implementation of Criminal Code amendments to facilitate testimony of children and other vulnerable witnesses.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Support Committee (SSC)

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programmes utilize Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs), registered nurses who have extensive training and education in forensic examinations of sexual assault victims, to provide emergency services to sexual assault victims in a hospital setting. SANEs are on call 24 hours a day and provide services to males, females and transgendered people 13 years of age and older.

The SSC was formed to provide support to the PEI SANE Coordinating Committee that is working to implement a SANE programme on the Island. The SSC is made up of PAC Members who also serve on the Coordinating Committee. To date the SSC has arranged an educational session on SANE programmes for the PAC Committee-of-the-Whole and on 19 February 2010, with endorsement from PAC, the Chair of PAC sent a letter in support of the establishment of a SANE program on PEI to the Chief Executive Officer of Queen Elizabeth Hospital with copies sent to the Ministers of Health and Wellness, Justice and Public Safety, and Community Services, Seniors and Labour.



2010 Family Violence Prevention Week Coordinating Committee

Family Violence Prevention Week is held each year in February on PEI. The Week runs from Sunday through Saturday and includes Valentine's Day. The FVPWC was a PAC ad hoc committee convened to develop and publicize a schedule of events being held around the province in recognition of the 2010 PEI Family Violence Prevention Week. In addition to assembling and publishing the schedule of the Week's events across the Island, FVPWC members worked to assist a citizen whose family member was a victim of family violence to hold a "Walk in Silence for Victims of Family Violence" in Charlottetown. The FVPWC engaged the Charlottetown Mayor's Purple Ribbon Task Force to host a reception at the Charlottetown City Hall following the Walk. The Walk was a great success with over 100 Islanders walking from Province House to City Hall in support of family, friends and neighbours who are victims of family violence.



Other Advocacy: Support for A Coordinated Approach to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

PAC received a presentation from representatives of the FASD Provincial Advisory Committee regarding the nature of FASD, its impact on individuals, their families, and society at large, and possible models for a coordinated, "no-blame" response to this issue. While most victims and perpetrators of family violence do not experience FASD, and while not all persons with FASD experience family violence, FASD does constitute a risk factor for family violence. On 2 February 2010 the Chair of PAC sent a letter to the Premier, copied to the Ministers of Health and Wellness and Community Services, Seniors and Labour as well as the Chair of the FASD Provincial Advisory Committee, expressing PAC's support for efforts underway in PEI to encourage a coordinated, "no-blame" approach to prevention, identification, and appropriate interventions regarding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Expenditures

Out of PAC's annual budget of \$10,000, in 2009/2010 it awarded small grants for the following projects consistent with PAC's mandate:

- Advisory Council on the Status of Women's annual Purple Ribbon Campaign Against Violence - \$2,000 (standing award);
- PAC Parent Education and Support Working Group Spring "Think Tank" co-sponsored by the Children's Secretariat to gather information on what is working well and what is needed to improve programming for parents on PEI - \$2,500;
- PAC Youth Education Working Group for focus groups with youth to identify violence prevention priorities - \$1,500;
- PEI Community Legal Information Association (CLIA) adaptation of a new CLIA booklet, Making a Safety Plan, for use by the Aboriginal community - \$1,500;

The remainder of PAC's budgeted funds were used to reimburse PAC community representatives for travel expenses to attend meetings, to cover a portion of the costs of the PAC November retreat which were shared with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and for general meeting expenses.



Agencies or organizations requesting PAC funding for projects are required to submit a formal application for support. The form is available on the PAC website or upon request by emailing Dr. Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl at wverhoekoftedahl@gov.pe.ca or calling (902) 368-6712.

Projects must be consistent with PAC's mandate in order to be considered for funding. Applications submitted by individuals will not be considered. Applications are accepted year round but MUST be received by Dr. Verhoek-Oftedahl by February 1st in order to be considered for funding in the fiscal year ending March 30th. Receipt of funding is contingent upon PAC approval of the project and availability of funds.

Awards and Events



Dr. Philip Smith, PAC Chair (front row, left) and Cathy McInnis, founder of the Walk (front row, second from left) in the First Annual Walk in Silence for Victims of Family Violence during Family Violence Prevention Week 2010.



PAC Member David O'Brien, Q.C. BBA, MBA, LLB received the 2009 Humanitarian Award from the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Heads of Prosecutions Committee honoring professional excellence and exemplary service both in the work environment and in the community.



PAC Member Rona Brown, BA, BSW, MSW, RSW received the 2009 Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation Award in recognition of outstanding contributions in family violence prevention.

Dr. Phillip Smith, Chair of PAC, lights a candle during its 2009 Memorial Service coordinated by the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, part of its annual Purple Ribbon Campaign.



PAC Committee Members



Premier Robert Ghiz and Minister Doug Currie (standing, centre right and left, respectively) with members of PAC, June 2009.



Members of the PAC Admin Committee at work

Contact

Members of the Premier's Action Committee (2009-2010)

Chair:

Member at Large - Dr. Philip Smith, Professor of Psychology, UPEI*

Resource:

Department of Community Services, Seniors and Labour
Family Violence Prevention & Community Development Coordinator*
(Dr. Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl)

Ex-Officio:

Department of Community Services, Seniors and Labour
(formerly Social Services and Seniors)
Director of Child and Family Services (Rona Brown)

Government Departments and Programs:

Department of Community Services, Seniors and Labour
(formerly Social Services and Seniors)
Child Protection (Wendy McCourt)
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Student Services (Glenn Edison)*
Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning
Population Secretariat (Jane Mallard)
Department of Justice and Public Safety (formerly Office of the Attorney General)
Crown Attorney (David O'Brien, Q.C.)*
Victim Services (Susan Maynard)*
Health PEI (formerly Department of Health)
Primary Care: Mental Health and Addictions (Jody MacLennan)
Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Sgt. Andrew Blackadar)
Inter-ministerial Women's Secretariat (Michelle Harris-Genge)*
Children's Secretariat (Sarah Henry)
Seniors' Secretariat (Catherine Freeze)

Arms-Length from Government Advisory Agency:

Advisory Council on the Status of Women (Lisa Murphy)*

Professional/Community Organizations:

Actions femmes I.-P.-E. Inc. (Debbie Gallant)
Aboriginal Women's Association (Marilyn Sark)
Association of Registered Nurses of PEI (Marilyn Sark)
Catholic Family Services Bureau (Diane Griffin)
Clergy Representative (Rev. Jack Spencer succeeded by Rev. Dr. Andrew Richardson)
Community Legal Information Association (Donna Langille)
East Prince Women's Information Centre (Andy Lou Somers)
Federation of PEI Municipalities (Ben Smith)
Medical Society of PEI (Dr. Christine MacNearney)
PEI Association of Newcomers to Canada (Melissa Coffin)
PEI Chiefs of Police Association (C/Supt. Randy Robar
succeeded by Chief Lewie Sutherland)
PEI Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc. (Phil Matusiewicz)*
PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre (Sigrid Rolfe)*
PEI Teachers' Federation (Carrie St. Jean)
Women's Institute of PEI (Glenn Younker)

*PAC Admin Standing Committee

Family Violence Prevention
and Community Development
Coordinator



Dr. Verhoek-Oftedahl

Dr. Verhoek-Oftedahl assumed the position of Family Violence Prevention and Community Development Coordinator in the PEI Department of Community Services, Seniors and Labour (formerly the Department of Social Services and Seniors) in March 2009 and serves as Resource to PAC. She is an injury epidemiologist with 14 years of experience in public health research in family violence across the lifespan including child maltreatment, teen dating violence, intimate partner violence, elder abuse and sexual violence.

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For more information:
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Acknowledgement

We thank PAC member Lisa Murphy for all of her work on the original design for this report and for providing the floral graphics.