



Department of the Secretary
of State of Canada

FREEDOM FROM FEAR:

**A WOMAN'S RIGHT,
A COMMUNITY CONCERN,
A NATIONAL PRIORITY**

Canada

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**A WOMAN'S RIGHT,
A COMMUNITY CONCERN,
A NATIONAL PRIORITY**

A Paper Prepared for

Corporate Policy Branch,
Secretary of State Canada

by

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Dear Friend:

The Department of the Secretary of State and Status of Women Canada are happy to present you with a copy of a recent publication entitled Freedom from Fear: a Woman's Right, a Community Concern, a National Priority. This report addresses the issue of women's safety in the urban environment.

The publication results from a project initiated by the Department of the Secretary of State. Considerable public attention greeted a report published in 1989 by the Department, entitled The City for Women: No Safe Place, written by Linda MacLeod, an expert on women's safety issues. Subsequently, Ms. MacLeod led a number of workshops on women's safety in various Canadian cities. The workshops brought together women's organizations, community agencies, police, municipal officials and others to examine together the factors that contribute to women's fear and the practical strategies that would make the community a safer place for women.

Freedom from Fear summarizes the issues that arose at the workshops and the strategies that were proposed. It is our hope that this is only the beginning, and that your community and others will build on the work done to date to increase women's safety. Further copies, in English or French, can be obtained from:

The Corporate Policy Branch
Secretary of State Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
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We are happy to collaborate in bringing this publication to you. We sincerely hope that it will be of interest to your organization, and will serve as a basis for further discussion and promotion of action to prevent violence against women in your community.

Sincerely,

Robert R. de Cotret
Secretary of State

Mary Collins
Minister Responsible
for the Status of Women

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Women's fear and safety is a community issue as well as a women's issue. Communities across Canada are increasingly committed to reducing women's fear and increasing the safety of women in their neighbourhoods in an effort to enhance the quality of life of all members of the community.

This report summarizes the fears, insights, programs and goals for change expressed by women and men who participated in eight community-based workshops on women's fear and safety in Calgary, Alberta; Thunder Bay, Ontario; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Regina, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Vancouver, British Columbia and St. John's, Newfoundland.

These workshops were sponsored by Secretary of State Canada and were organized in response to requests from members of these eight communities who wanted to learn more about the extent of fear and violence in Canada and who also wanted to explore ways that their communities could decrease fear and increase safety.

The workshops were structured so that participants could express fears in terms of their personal experiences and their local realities. Those present were encouraged to exchange information about current programs and to explore responses to fear and violence which reflect the realities, strengths and constraints of their particular communities.

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S FEAR

Through the insights shared by workshop participants, it became evident that fear affects women's everyday actions and choices. It also became clear that fear is deeply influenced by the context of inequality, gender bias and sexism which women experience daily, and within which actual physical or sexual violence may occur.

Eleven main types of fear were identified by women in the workshops:

- fear of physical and sexual violence in the home and on the street;
- fear of being unprotected by the justice system; (This fear was generated by anxieties about police corruption and brutality and by a strong perception that our laws are not adequate to assure women of either protection or justice.)
- fear of being doubly victimized by people in authority generally;

- fear of being isolated either by not having adequate information to obtain needed help, or by not knowing or trusting others to help in a crisis;
- fear of intolerance and racism;
- fear for our children;
- fear of being victimized in the workplace particularly when working after hours;
- fear of being victimized in a university or college;
- fear of being attacked using different forms of transit including not only public transit, but also while driving in one's own car at night, while cycling or walking or while in a taxi;
- fear of men;
- fear of living in a violent society.

These fears are strongly linked to and influenced by women's more generalized feelings of vulnerability in our society. Women spoke of feeling that they are not in control of their lives. They spoke of feeling uneasy, vulnerable and at risk. For older women, women with disabilities, women who are members of visible minority groups and immigrant women, these feelings are even more pronounced than for other women.

Participants in the eight workshops left no doubt that while fear is a central part of women's reality, it is rarely an integral part of men's experiences. In fact, few men could even understand the level and range of fears women described. Women expressed some resentment at the ease with which men live their lives, without the feeling that they must adjust their behaviour, decisions and appearance to reduce the risk of being the victim of violence. It was felt that gender neutral efforts designed to make cities safer for "everyone" usually fail to consider sexual assault or the life experiences common to women. However, initiatives specifically targetted at women's safety will have the effect of making communities safer for everyone.

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Women and men present shared information about a wide range of programs already in place or planned to address and reduce women's fear and victimization. The programs ranged from a university program to monitor and stop potential assaults during "frosh" rituals, to the creation of interdisciplinary protocols by government departments,

to community safety audits, to community-policing initiatives, to neighbourhood programs to encourage residents to leave their porch lights on in order to reduce fear of residents walking on the street at night.

WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE?

Although communities are already launching varied and innovative programs to reduce fear and increase safety, people who participated in these workshops agreed that courageous commitments to change are needed by governments, by community groups and by individuals. There was also general agreement that future initiatives should incorporate five main principles, namely:

- men and women should be part of the solution;
- immediate and empowering action is required;
- action should build on the strengths of the community;
- initiatives should reduce duplication of services and increase interdisciplinarity;
- the expertise of women's groups should be incorporated into action.

A. What Could Communities Do?

Participants further agreed that communities should mobilize to:

- initiate safety audits;
- improve street lighting;
- create city or town task forces on fear and safety;
- create a community-based organization to address fear and safety;
- educate professionals;
- encourage preventive programs to reduce schoolyard violence;
- work to reduce violence in universities and colleges.

B. What Could Governments Do?

Governments were seen as having responsibilities to:

- help communities better identify their problems and needs around fear and safety;
- promote dialogue among professionals, workers in grass roots organizations and government officials;
- promote cross-cultural awareness to reduce isolation and the high level of vulnerability among visible minority groups;
- fund existing prevention and intervention programs;
- provide support for new local initiatives;

- provide support to encourage interagency coordination;
- promote community development;
- support and promote curriculum development;
- help influence the media to reduce sexism and violence;
- support community-based forums and organizations with a specific mandate to reduce fear and violence.

CONCLUSION

Commitment to reduce fear and increase safety is growing in communities across Canada. Women and men across the country are adamant that they will not silently condone the violence and fear which are so much a part of women's lives. The insights of the participants in these eight community workshops provide clear and consistent messages for cooperative change which will make our cities and towns safer for women and which will increase the quality of life for women, children and men.

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INTRODUCTION

Reducing Violence is a Public Priority

Reducing violence against women has become a public priority over the past year. Women, men and children across Canada have been shocked into a new awareness that violence and fear of violence are part of the daily lives of women across Canada.

The Montreal massacre, in which fourteen young women engineering students were brutally murdered through a premeditated plan, exposed the vulnerability of women to violence, raised questions about the extent of violence against women in Canada, and generated debate around the values and beliefs which Marc Lépine used to justify the massacre. This debate and questioning has been injected with urgency over the past months as one after another act of brutality against women and female children has come to public attention.

Men as well as women are looking for answers to many different questions. Is violence in our society increasing? Are women more vulnerable now than they were in the past? Why is violence against children so prevalent? Do more men want to hurt women? Who can parents trust? How can women who are assaulted by their husbands get protection? Is it true that, "Canada is becoming a country in which half of its citizens are afraid of the other half"?¹ Is the fear and violence which is so much a part of women's lives, an unsettling indicator that women are just as constrained and unequal as they were decades ago, despite efforts to give women more equal access to all aspects of Canadian society?

¹ Callwood, June, "Male Rage", published in Homemakers Magazine, June, 1990.

The growth in awareness and the dialogue which has accompanied this awareness has disturbed and angered people sufficiently, that it has also mobilized a desire for action. People across Canada are now looking for practical solutions. They want to know what they can do about violence in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, in their towns and cities. People are strongly asserting that women and children as well as men must have the right to live free from fear and violence. Women and men are recognizing that the level of fear and violence women experience, along with the constraints women feel forced to put on their actions and those of their children to reduce the risk of violence, is eroding the quality of life, freedom and equality of all people across Canada.

SECRETARY OF STATE'S RESPONSE TO THIS GROWING CONCERN

The Publication of "The City for Women: No Safe Place"

The widespread concern of women and men across Canada and the accompanying search for effective ways to reduce violence and fear was strongly communicated to Secretary of State Canada, following its publication of a monograph: The City for Women: No Safe Place, in October, 1989.

Earlier that year, the Department had been approached by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities with a request to participate in the European and North American Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention. As well, Secretary of State Canada was asked to assist in the preparation of a number of briefs for the conference, including one on urban safety for women.

When this report was released, it captured a great deal of media and public attention, and several hundred copies were subsequently requested by and distributed to individuals and organizations around Canada, by the national and regional offices of the Department of the Secretary of State.

Interest in the report and the issue of women's fear and safety escalated with the violent events of the winter of 1989/90. Over this period, representatives from several communities across Canada approached Secretary of State to request workshops which

could help women and men in their communities take action based on the recommendations in the report, in order to reduce fear and violence against women in their cities and towns. They also expressed a desire to learn what various Canadian municipalities are doing about public safety for women.

The Sponsoring of Eight Community Workshops

In order to respond to these requests and the high level of interest they revealed, the Corporate Policy Branch of Secretary of State contracted with the author of The City for Women: No Safe Place, Linda MacLeod, to arrange meetings in eight cities and towns which had approached Secretary of State to request workshops, namely: Calgary, Alberta; Thunder Bay, Ontario; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Regina, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Vancouver, British Columbia; and St. John's, Newfoundland.

The workshops were organized either by staff from a Secretary of State regional office or by a local agency or group which expressed interest and/or had initiated work in this area. When a non-governmental agency took on the organization of the workshop, the appropriate Secretary of State regional office representatives helped make connections with that agency and often provided behind-the-scenes support.

The workshops were designed to build on existing, identified interest and to provide a catalyst for practical local action in order to increase safety and decrease women's fear. They were structured to highlight the expertise and activities of women's groups that are providing support, protection and/or advocacy for women who are victims of violence. And they were organized to stimulate the exchange of knowledge across groups and sectors.

Participants learned about related initiatives in other parts of Canada, explored fears and problems relating to violence in their own communities, and shared information about the expertise which already exists locally. Those involved also spent time brainstorming about what could be done immediately or in the short term using existing

expertise and resources, as well as what could be done in the longer term which might require new resources and knowledge.

Sharing the Knowledge

Secretary of State representatives have also attempted to spread the knowledge gained through the above initiatives. Sally Andrews of the Corporate Policy Branch and the author of this report were involved informally in the planning of a related meeting in Ottawa, in October, 1990. The Women's Program within the Ontario Regional Office of the Secretary of State held a one-day training session on women's fear and safety that same week. And the national Women's Program arranged for a presentation on the eight community workshops at their national meeting for regional and headquarters staff in November of 1990.

From these follow-up activities, it became evident that interest in the area was not totally satisfied by this brief project. Continued requests from other municipalities for further activity also suggest that energy for action at the municipal level is high. For example, over the period of this contract, enquiries were received from Edmonton, Alberta; Montreal, Quebec; and Saint John, New Brunswick about the possibility of holding similar workshops. It is hoped that follow-up in these locations will be possible in the new year, either through Secretary of State or through interest groups or agencies with expertise in this area. A more detailed discussion of the ideas for future action which were generated by this project is included in a later section of this paper.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report is an attempt to build on the ideas raised in The City for Women: No Safe Place through the eyes and words of women and men who participated in the eight community workshops held across the country. The paper is intended to provide a brief synthesis of the major themes and revelations which came out of the workshops. Most of the information was collected during the workshops themselves. However, some of

the issues were raised by participants and organizers directly after the workshops, and some were suggested to the author weeks later.

Inevitably, despite an attempt to reflect the words and ideas of workshop participants, the emphasis attributed to different themes in this report, and even the interpretation of issues raised by workshop participants, will be highly subjective. The author, and Secretary of State Canada, would welcome feedback from workshop participants and others interested in this area to clarify our understanding of women's fear and to help suggest directions for action.

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S FEAR

Fear Affects Every Part of Women's Lives

Probably the most shocking finding of this project was the overwhelming range of women's fears. No aspect of women's lives seems to provide guaranteed freedom from fear. Fear is not as simple and isolated as being afraid of a rapist or mugger on the street. Instead, fear is woven into the very fabric of women's lives and affects their day to day actions and choices.

The fears women spoke of can be grouped into eleven major types of fear, discussed briefly below. The range of fears raised underscores the fact that women's fear is deeply influenced by the context of inequality, gender bias and sexism which women experience daily and within which the actual physical or sexual violence may occur. In fact, for some women, fear of the demeaning, unfair, racist and/or harassing treatment they anticipate receiving if they seek help, looms as large as their fear of the violent incident itself.

What Do Women Fear?

1. The Fear of Violence Itself

The types of violence women most fear are: sexual assault outside the home by a male stranger or slight acquaintance, and physical and/or sexual assault in the home by a husband or partner. Certainly, the major part of the time devoted to discussion was spent on ways to make the environment outside the home safer. At the same time, the degree of concern women expressed about violence in the home was striking. This punctuated the reality that for women there is no safe place.

2. The Fear of Being Unprotected by the Justice System

Participants in several workshops spoke of their fear that they could not count on police protection if they were attacked or at risk of being attacked and called for help. Women raised not only their concern that police were ineffectual and could not provide the protection women need. They also spoke passionately of their fear of police corruption and violence. Some even went so far as to say they felt more at risk of violence from police than from any other group of men in their city or town. In two workshops, the participants mentioned the well-known brutality of the police toward prostitutes. Women suggested that this violence towards prostitutes was an indicator of hostility toward women more generally and could easily be turned against any woman.

Women in one group also identified a fear that our laws are too limited in that they do not reflect women's experiences of violence and are generally too skewed to property-related crimes to provide women with the protection or the fair treatment they need and want. The women who raised this issue also pointed out that the legal system historically has not benefitted women, and that sentences for crimes of violence against women are often little more than a slap on the wrist.

3. The Fear of People in Authority More Generally

In two groups, the participants also spoke of their fears of people in authority more generally. Church leaders, school leaders and youth group leaders were identified as being objects of uncertainty and fear in terms of the safety of children. Certainly the revelations of sexual abuse by church leaders in Newfoundland have had a profound effect on people's trust of those who deal with children.

Participants in other groups also spoke of their fear of being doubly victimized if they sought help not just from police, but from psychiatrists, other health-care workers, social workers, and lawyers. Women spoke of feeling defenceless because they were not sure who they could trust. One woman said she was not sure "if anybody in authority is really there to help women."

4. The Fear of Being Isolated

A closely related fear and a fear stressed in almost every workshop was the fear of being unprotected because of isolation from other people in the community, and because of isolation created by lack of knowledge. Most women appear to feel at least some fear that neighbours or passersby would not come to their assistance if they were being attacked. Participants spoke of not knowing their neighbours, and of not having any idea who they would turn to in their neighbourhood if they were in danger. Some women mentioned particularly the fear they experience when they are not supported by other women around their concerns regarding violence against women, and more generally in their everyday lives. These women spoke of the intense feeling of isolation that a lack of support by other women creates.

Women and men spoke of the distrust toward others which is a product of this isolation and the fear such distrust and isolation generates. Women said they would not approach people to ask directions, or to get to know them, because they would fear harassment, intimidation and possible violence. Men also said they were afraid to

approach women they did not know, partly because they were aware that their approach could make the woman fearful, and partly because the men feared being accused falsely of harassing or assaulting the woman.

A sub-theme of the fear engendered by isolation is the fear that a lack of knowledge of safe and unsafe areas, and/or a lack of knowledge of people or services that could provide help, could render a woman even more defenceless. This fear was most pronounced for immigrant women.

5. The Fear of Intolerance and Racism

The fear of racial violence and the fear of gay bashing was often raised by workshop participants. Violence toward people with disabilities was also mentioned, but less often. Interestingly, these fears were not always identified by women or men who are members of visible minorities, who are gay or lesbian, or who are visibly disabled. Workshop participants seemed to see violence based on racism and intolerance of perceived differences based on sexual orientation or disability as indicators of an acceptance of attitudes which foster violence and of a more generalized disrespect for others which posed threats to all women, and which violated any espoused principles of equality.

6. Fears for Our Children

There was a widespread perception that the world is not a safe place for our children. In every workshop but two, participants spoke of playground violence as a serious concern for them. Women said that this violence was taking on a different hue than the bullying and rough play which was the experience of most adults as children. Simulated gang rapes in which little girls in kindergarten, grade one or grade two, are dragged behind the school or into a washroom by several little boys, undressed, hit and kicked, were reported. Repeated violence and humiliation by one small boy toward one little girl were also mentioned. The lack of intervention or the minimizing of the

violence by teachers and principals in these incidents were seen as providing covert support for such behaviour.

Parents also identified their fears of letting their children go to friends' houses to play. Since most parents work outside the home, it is harder for parents to get to know the parents of their children's friends. Parents are therefore fearful of letting their children play at houses where the adults are strangers.

Parents spoke as well of their fears of their children being abducted. One woman said it was difficult to know how to teach your child independence, when the old measures, like allowing your child to go to the corner store on an errand, are becoming increasingly dangerous.

Parents with teenage children also spoke of fears that their children working in fast food chains or in street retail booths would be robbed, assaulted or abducted.

7. Fears in the Workplace

Women working outside the home report fears of being sexually harassed in their place of work, and fears of being attacked if they work late. Women said that when they work late, they not only frequently find themselves alone in a wing of the building, but stair lights and even some office lights may be turned off, there is no one to help them, and they may have to negotiate a deserted underground parking garage or poorly lit street to get home.

8. Fears of Women in Universities and Colleges

Fear of violence on campus has become a prevalent issue in many universities across Canada. In the eight workshops run, participants identified their fears of using underground tunnels, particularly at night, their feelings of vulnerability working late in a lab or in the library, and their general fears of walking anywhere on campus at night. There was some concern raised as well about attitudes toward women permeating some campuses. Concern was shared that "woman hating" or "feminist bashing" were popular among some factions on campus, and that campus cover-ups of violence against women

as "normal boys sowing their wild oats" made women very vulnerable in campus settings.

9. Fears Related to Transportation

Women spoke of their fears using every form of transit available to them. Women expressed fears of walking alone, particularly at night, but some participants pointed out that even in the day when people are at work, there are areas of their city or town that are even more deserted and fear-inducing than at night.

Women pointed out that walking with children increases their fear because they feel worried that a child could wander off or be abducted, because they feel less able to defend themselves and may be less focussed on people around them if they are watching the movements of children.

In all of the cities and towns visited, women talked of their fears of taking cabs. Frequently, one cab company in a town or city is known as the most dangerous, and stories were often shared about sexual harassment, insults, innuendoes, threats and even assaults women had suffered at the hands of cab drivers.

Cyclists also feel vulnerable, particularly at night. A few women mentioned the negative attitude some motorists have toward cyclists, and spoke of their fear of these motorists threatening or even hitting them purposefully, partly because of their feeling that cyclists are "taking over the road" and partly because the cyclist is a woman. Some suggested that motorists "play chicken" with cyclists by forcing them off the road and increasingly consider this good and justifiable "sport".

Public transit was definitely a source of fear for the women who use it, and for parents whose children use buses or subways to go to and from school. Fears around the transit system ranged from feeling vulnerable standing alone at a deserted bus or subway stop, to fears induced by graffiti on the bus shelters, to harassment experienced by women in buses and subways, to the risk of children being abducted. Women who use public transit routinely or whose children use public transit because the woman does not own a car also spoke of their feelings of frustration that their children and themselves

are forced into dangerous and compromising situations using public transit. They felt that the risks they suffer and their children suffer are one more way that poor women and children and all single parents are penalized.

But even women who own cars spoke of their growing fear of driving alone or with their children at night. This fear was linked to the increasing perception that there is "no one you can trust". The stranger who offers to give a woman a hand if her car breaks down is seen more and more by women as a potential threat, not a saviour.

10. Fear of Men

Implicit in many of the above fears women highlighted through the workshops was a fear of men. The women in one workshop felt strongly that the focus of the fear must be clearly named to be men. However, this group of women, like the other groups of workshop participants stressed that this fear does not preclude involving men who are not violent in the solution.

This general fear of men was exemplified by reported fears of misogyny and of an anti-feminist backlash. However, fear of men was also identified by women as manifesting itself in a fear of repairmen and servicemen as well as a fear of dating and of establishing relationships.

11. The Fear of Living in a Violent Society

Women placed all of the above fears in the context of their fears living in a society where sexual violence and the degradation of women are used to sell products, to entertain, to attract attention. Women spoke of their feeling of vulnerability and hopelessness when they walk into a corner store where pornography is prominently displayed. They spoke of their fear walking along streets where sex shops, strip joints, topless bars and billboards put women's bodies "up for grabs". They expressed exasperation at their attempts to teach their children positive attitudes toward sexuality

when so many portrayals of sex on the media and in advertising presents rape and brutality towards women as titillating.

The range of fears listed above demonstrates that fear touches most aspects of women's lives and reveals that most women live with fear as part of their day-to-day realities. However, a fuller understanding of women's fear demands that links be made to the realities of women's lives which also increase their vulnerability and which contribute to their feelings of fear. The next three sections outline the larger context within which women's fear exists and grows.

Inequality is Integrally Linked to Women's Fears

Women's fears are integrally linked to their daily experiences of inequality and isolation. Fear is not an isolated emotion, but a feeling that is based on women's more generalized feeling of vulnerability in our society.

Older women, women with disabilities, women who are members of visible minority groups and immigrant women on the whole expressed strong fears along with strong feelings of isolation, vulnerability and inequality. It is noteworthy that their fears tended to be focussed at least as much on treatment at the hands of authorities as on fears of actual physical and/or sexual violence.

However, overall, the women who attended these workshops spoke of feelings of not being in control of their lives, of feeling uneasy often, of feeling vulnerable and at risk.

Women Feel Forced to Adjust Their Behaviour to Reduce Their Risks

Unfortunately, because of time limitations, the workshops conducted did not focus explicitly on ways women cope with their fears. However, as women described their fears, some spoke of not being able to perform the most routine tasks, like going to

work, doing the shopping, picking children up from daycare, going for a walk after supper, without planning their "strategy" to reduce risks. Women expressed resentment at the ease with which men live their lives, and felt that women were under far more constant stress caused by the need to be ever-vigilant for themselves and for their children.

Some women who had been victims of violence talked about changing their appearance after the assault. Some stopped wearing makeup, wore baggier clothing, cut their hair. Others started wearing makeup, tried to look more "professional", more "in control".

Generally, women concurred that they were taking more care now with their behaviour than they did a decade ago. Women said they are less likely to walk around the downtown area at night. A few women spoke of deciding against taking university night courses because they didn't want the "hassle of walking around campus and finding parking at night". One woman said she forbade her teenage children to get after-school jobs because she was too fearful for their safety.

Many women spoke of their growing distrust and wariness of men. Young women, teachers and parents expressed concern that negative attitudes toward women and the acceptance or even the glorification of violence against women is becoming more not less acceptable among younger men.

Fear is a Woman's Reality That Men Don't Understand

The eight workshops held left no doubt that fear is a central part of women's reality, but is rarely an integral part of men's experiences. The participants at the workshop were overwhelmingly female. This imbalance in numbers was certainly partly attributable to the emphasis on involving and empowering women's groups through the process, but organizations serving men and women tended to send a woman to the meeting rather than a man.

In addition, it became evident to participants in most of the workshops that the men present were shocked by and did not understand the level and range of fears the women described. In one workshop, in particular, the radical difference in men's and women's experiences of fear became the focus of the meeting, and has shocked the community members present into a new level of awareness and vigilance concerning the need for consciousness raising and information sharing sessions between women and men. In this one meeting, part way through the workshop, after the women present had described their fears for about twenty minutes, one of three men present raised his hand and said how shocked he was to hear that the women in the room were so fearful. He went on to say that he was surprised to find that his female colleagues, women he saw as independent, strong and competent, women he felt he knew, could feel this degree of fear and vulnerability in their daily lives.

Through his courageous statement, he revealed the prevalence of the societal stereotype that a fearful woman is a neurotic woman, often a lonely, older woman, not an educated, young or middle-aged woman with a career. Women and men generally tend not to think that other women more like them also feel fearful. Through his admission of surprise he also revealed the wide chasm which exists between men and women because they don't share this pervasive and visceral experience of fear in their daily lives. Through this acknowledgement, particularly because he is a man who works in the area of violence against women, he alerted the women in that community of the need to re-examine the assumptions made by people working with victims, survivors and perpetrators of woman abuse and/or sexual assault. He also alerted all women and men working to reduce violence to ensure that they and their colleagues have a deep understanding of the realities of the people they try to support and help.

In all workshops where participants came face to face with the realization that men don't understand women's fears and realities, the women and men present began to understand that to take effective action to reduce women's fears and increase their safety, community members must be alert to the need for public education and more informal information sharing to communicate the urgency of this problem for women.

WHAT ARE COMMUNITIES DOING NOW?

In preparation for these workshops and through the workshops themselves, many examples of existing community activities came to light. Some of these initiatives are directed explicitly at reducing women's fear and increasing women's safety. Others are more generally directed at reducing fear. It is important to note that programs directed at women specifically have the potential as well to reduce fear and risks for children and men. Conversely, programs aimed at the general public will probably disproportionately benefit women because women's fear and risks are the highest.

A brief overview of some examples of the activities taking place across Canada, by location, follows. This overview should not be seen as exhaustive, since a comprehensive survey of initiatives was not undertaken. Nonetheless, the range of examples highlighted demonstrates the breadth of possibilities and the strength of commitment growing across Canada to reduce fear and violence in our society. The initiatives included underscore the importance of cooperation across sectors, and demonstrate that many important steps can be taken with little or no money, or within existing municipal budgets.

St. John's, Newfoundland

Memorial University has hired a Sexual Harassment Officer. Her activities to date have focussed on "froshing" rituals, which often translate into forms of assault. She has identified a concern on the part of faculty members about the possibility of false allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment by students. For further information, contact: Jacqueline Turner, Sexual Harassment Advisor, Health Science Complex, Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland, 709-737-2015.

The City of Mount Pearl has hired young people to patrol walkways and parks. The Planning Department has also begun to look at new initiatives with a view to reducing crime.

Fredericton, New Brunswick

In November, 1990, the New Brunswick government in cooperation with Solicitor General Canada, Justice Canada, and Health and Welfare Canada, sponsored a three-day Provincial Symposium on Women Abuse and the Criminal Justice System in Moncton, New Brunswick. The primary objectives of this symposium were: to sensitize professionals to the dynamics of woman abuse; to promote a multi-disciplinary approach by the criminal justice system in responding to incidents of woman abuse; to facilitate local community team approaches to respond to and prevent woman abuse; and to initiate protocol training for criminal justice system personnel. The event was organized in part to respond to a study released by the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, which criticized the justice system intervention in incidents of woman abuse. In addition, the symposium was a first step in training criminal justice personnel to respond to violence against women. A series of regional training sessions will follow, in order to ensure implementation of the interdisciplinary protocols which were developed by the New Brunswick government for use by professionals to respond to cases of woman abuse, and were introduced for the first time at the symposium.

For further information, contact: Brenda Thomas, Senior Analyst, Policy, Planning and Evaluation, New Brunswick Department of the Solicitor General, P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 5H1, (506) 453-7142, or Pauline Desrosiers-Hickey, Director, Research and Planning, New Brunswick Department of Justice, P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 5H1, (506) 453-3693.

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

On December 6, 1990, a provincial workshop was held on making communities safer, sponsored by the Summerside Police. In addition, the provincial government is conducting a series of community consultations on family violence.

For further information, contact Jill Lightwood, Coordinator, Justice Resource Services, P. O. Box 2000, Charlottetown, P.E.I., C1A 7N8, 902-368-4583.

Halifax, Nova Scotia

In Halifax, as part of a widespread emphasis on community policing, police ensure that people who are part of Neighbourhood Watch Programs receive practical, neighbourhood-based information about property crimes which have occurred in their neighbourhood and ways to help prevent such crime, through a computerized telephone network.

For further information, contact: Constable Daryl Licence or Constable Neil Logan, Halifax Police, 1975 Gottingen Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 2H1, 902-421-6595 or 902-421-6847.

New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

Police in this town have developed a low-cost alert system, called the "Blue Light Program" to help seniors and people who are disabled, signal to neighbours and passers-by that they are feeling fearful, are in danger, or are having a health-related emergency. Under this program, blue flashing lights are provided free of charge by the police and community groups to people who feel vulnerable, and are installed in a lamp close to a window which can be seen from the street. If the person feels they need help they simply switch on the light. Police have found that people who may have been hesitant to call the police because they feel fearful, are more comfortable switching on the lamp. In addition, the blue light program helps increase neighbour's willingness to take responsibility for one another, and can reduce the isolation which contributes to fear.

For further information contact: Chief Steve Kinnaid, New Glasgow Police Department, 182 Dalhousie Street, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, B2H 4M3, 902-752-1941.

Montreal, Quebec

"Femmes et Ville" in 1989 released a report recommending, among many other things, that the city establish a map of locations where violence is most likely, using police statistics, city statistics and transportation statistics, as well as direct information

from citizens on their perceptions. Groups surveyed included groups of women who help victims of violence and organizations that work with older women.

For further information, contact: Marie-Dominique Lahaise, 514-872-8204.

Ottawa, Ontario

In Ottawa, Diane Holmes, a local alderwoman, mobilized an informal group of women to organize a public forum on urban safety in October, 1990. Follow-up on the report coming out of this forum is now being discussed. In addition, Carleton University in Ottawa commissioned a survey to learn more about fear levels among different groups of students and staff on campus and to identify which parts of the university are most threatening and to whom.

For further information contact: Diane Holmes, Alderman, City Hall, 111 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 5A1, 613-564-1311 and Fran Klodawsky, Status of Women Office, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 0Z9, 613-788-5622.

Thunder Bay, Ontario

Northern Women's Centre hired a woman to map out areas of the university and city where harassment of women has taken place. Lakehead University has subsequently committed \$30,000 to make the campus safer.

On October 15, 1990, a community safety forum was held. Out of this forum came an action plan which includes an emphasis on more public education and further safety audits.

For further information contact: Lisa Bengtsson, Secretary of State, Canada, Suite 234, 33 South Court St., Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7B 2W6, 807-345-2316.

Toronto, Ontario

Metrac

Probably the best-known organization working to reduce women's victimization and to increase urban safety is METRAC, The Metro Action Committee on Public

Violence Against Women and Children. In the words of METRAC's executive director, Pat Marshall, "METRAC searches society looking for entry points to increase women's safety and security". METRAC has worked closely with the City of Toronto to increase the safety of the transit system, the city's parks and underground parking garages. They have collaborated with the Metro Toronto Transit Commission as well as the Metro Police on a joint study, resulting in a report called "Moving Forward: Making Transit Safer for Women". METRAC has produced another report entitled "Planning for Sexual Assault Prevention: Women's Safety in High Park". They have also produced a "Women's Safety Audit Kit", designed to help women and community groups organize to gather information on their concerns, fears and experiences in their living and working spaces, and then to go on to do something to reduce their fears and to increase their safety. Most recently, through the preparation of a policy paper on women's fear and safety, METRAC hopes to encourage the development of safety planning guidelines by municipalities.

For further information, or to order one of METRAC's publications, contact METRAC, 158 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 2T8, 416-392-3135.

The Toronto Safe City Committee

In Toronto as well, the Toronto Safe City Committee reports to City Council through a standing committee. Formed in April, 1989, it contains representatives of City Council, municipal departments and front-line women's groups active and concerned about women's safety in the city. The work of this committee has been instrumental in the allocation of resources for self-defence classes and sexual assault prevention education programs. The Committee has also held a series of workshops with city planners to ensure that security concerns are integrated into planning reviews. To learn more about this committee, contact Carolyn Whitzman, Coordinator, Safe City Committee, 18th Floor, East Tower, New City Hall, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2, 416-392-7339.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

In Winnipeg, City Council has committed \$15,000 for a community-based task force on violence against women. In addition, a study group has been formed between Aboriginal and Catholic groups to look at abuse in Aboriginal communities, with a particular emphasis on abuse in residential schools. As well, the Attorney General recently announced funds for an investigation of criminal justice intervention in domestic violence cases.

For further information contact: Renata Bublick, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, 412 McDermot Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 204-943-2561 regarding the City Council task force and Jacqueline Friesen, Secretary of State Canada, 204-983-5395, for the second and third initiatives mentioned.

Regina, Saskatchewan

In Regina, in the spring of 1990, the Mayor's office held a community conference on crime prevention and urban safety. Working groups created after this conference worked over the summer to produce papers responding to recommendations made at the first conference, for a second conference held in November, 1990. The community will take forward an action plan to implement a Council on Urban Safety to ensure that recommendations coming out of both conferences are implemented.

For further information, or to receive copies of these working papers, contact Dora Mushka, Mayor's Office, City of Regina, 306-777-7309.

Calgary, Alberta

In Calgary, the City established a task force on violence, which is currently receiving briefs and hearing presentations.

For further information contact: Mary-Jane Amey, c/o: Mayor's Task Force on Community and Family Violence, P. O. Box 2100, Station "M", Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2M5, 403-220-6711.

Edmonton, Alberta

In Edmonton, Neighbourhood Watch in collaboration with Alberta Hydro coordinated a "Light Up the Night" promotion, encouraging residents to leave their porch lights on all night on a specific night. The campaign demonstrated that street lighting can be augmented, fear reduced and safety increased in a low-cost manner that gives individuals the feeling that they can do something to make a difference for safety.

For further information, contact: Sergeant Jim Templeton, Edmonton Police Service, 9620-103A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 0H7, 403-421-3427.

Red Deer, Alberta

Red Deer recently received money from the Alberta government to create a safe city community. As part of that project, they started cab watch, following a series of sexual assaults on convenience store workers. Under this community initiative, cab drivers periodically drop into convenience stores to check on the safety of the workers. This not only makes the workers feel more secure, but breaks down the monotony of late night work for both the cab driver and the store clerk.

For further information, please call Neil Garvin, Coordinator, Safe City Project, Red Deer, Alberta, 403-342-8151.

Vancouver, British Columbia

In Vancouver, the B.C. Transit Police have a crime prevention unit which is looking at better lighting, the development of a media campaign and the potential for leaving new buses open in the back to reduce the number of incidents of indecent exposure, frotulism (rubbing against another person) and assault.

In addition, one informal group of women have begun doing safety audits and are encouraging other women to undertake their own audits.

For further information about these initiatives, contact: Constable Wendy Hawthorne, B.C. Transit Police, 1296 Staton St., Vancouver, B.C., 604-685-7220.

WHAT MORE COULD COMMUNITIES BE DOING?

In The City for Women: No Safe Place, an extensive list of potential ways communities and governments could help mobilize to make our communities safer and to reduce fear was included. Once again, partly to avoid repetition, and partly because of the limited scope of this project, no attempt will be made in this report to be exhaustive in the recommendations made. Instead, the principles for follow-up action and some more specific suggestions which came from the workshop participants will be highlighted to emphasize the importance of generating momentum from the neighbourhood and community levels as well as from government levels to the community.

Principles for Community Action

1. Men and Women Should be Part of the Solution

Although fear is overwhelmingly a women's experience, there was widespread agreement among participants in the workshops that men as well as women must be part of the solution. Dialogue between women and men is needed to expand men's understanding of women's fear and to break down the experiential and knowledge barriers which can impede effective change. Workshop participants also stressed that men must take a significant part of the responsibility for implementing solutions since the institutions in our society which could help reduce women's fear and increase safety still tend to be male-dominated. Finally and most centrally, the point was emphasized repeatedly throughout these workshops that by reducing women's fear and increasing women's safety, the entire community benefits. Fear is not just a woman's issue, for fear ultimately reduces the quality of life of men, women and children in our society. If communities are to be strengthened and if our neighbourhoods are to become safer, therefore, men must take responsibility for male violence, and men as well as women must become part of the solution.

2. Women and Men Want Immediate and Empowering Action

Most of the participants in the workshops held recognized that in order to address the inequality and isolation which is so intricately interwoven with women's fear and with women's experiences of violence, long term social and value change will be essential. Nonetheless, participants indicated a strong desire to identify some immediate action alternatives. Women and some men took the position that the level of violence and fear had now reached such a serious and pervasive level that immediate action is essential.

3. Action Should Build on the Strengths of the Community

Participants were generally very receptive to the suggestion made through the facilitator of the workshops that participants build on the strengths of their communities. It was enlightening and exciting for workshop participants to discover the wide range of existing activities in their communities related to: fear reduction, safety, support for victims and survivors of violence, counselling for perpetrators of violence and the reduction of isolation and inequality.

Those present at the workshops often felt overwhelmed at the thought of generating totally new ideas about reducing fear, but were reassured at the idea that what their community may need and want to reduce fear and violence against women could in part involve the expansion of existing programs, not the creation of totally new programs.

Participants also felt that building on community strengths can mobilize community participation and break down the isolation which tends to increase fear and violence.

4. Reduce Duplication of Services and Increase Interdisciplinarity

In a time of scarce resources and the added burdens cutbacks place on service providers, participants were also enthusiastic to learn of ways that duplication of services could be reduced. Through the meetings, it became obvious that in most if not all

communities, there is too little communication across programs and agencies. Very often, agencies are in competition with one another for "ownership" of the issue and for scarce funding. In addition, people from different professions and organizations often hold different world views which create barriers to information sharing. In several communities, participants discovered through the verbal reports on existing programs, that in fact there was overlap if not outright duplication of services in their communities. In at least one such community, participants have already taken action to eliminate the duplication identified.

One of the most clear messages to come out of the workshops was the need for interdisciplinary and cross-agency cooperation to reduce fear and increase the safety of women. It quickly became evident to workshop participants that women's fear and safety is a very urgent, but multi-faceted issue which demands multi-faceted solutions. Workshop participants showed real respect for the knowledge and activities of people in other agencies, as well as an apparent willingness to consider working together.

5. The Expertise of Women's Groups Should be Incorporated into Action

Workshop participants benefitted greatly from the knowledge which representatives from women's groups working to help victims/survivors of violence brought to the meetings. In most communities, for several years, transition house workers and workers in sexual assault centres have been providing support, a safe environment and information to women who have been victims of violence. The very direct experience of these workers can provide an invaluable source of information to understand better women's fears and the many dimensions of women's victimization during and after the physical and/or sexual violence itself.

Suggestions for Action

In many workshops, the dialogue around fear and the exchange of information about what is currently happening in the community was so intense, that it spilled over into the time allocated for brainstorming on concrete alternatives for action. It became

obvious that in most cases, separate follow-up meetings would have been beneficial to generate specific recommendations, after the participants had a chance to digest the information presented about the nature of the problem in their community and the tools already at their disposal through existing programs.

Nonetheless, several suggestions were made, and are listed below. It should be noted that these suggestions came up repeatedly, and reflect the principles for action summarized earlier in this paper.

1. Initiate Safety Audits

The idea of safety audits was extremely enthusiastically received by participants in all workshops. In a safety audit, small groups of friends, neighbours, work colleagues or concerned citizens share their concerns about the safety of their neighbourhood, place of work, or route home. They go over the area with checklists, identifying places or circumstances that make people feel unsafe, noting what concrete actions could be taken to improve the situation, and working together to get the changes made. Examples of places included in an audit might be a neighbourhood park with poor lighting or shrubbery grown too high near the pathways, or a parking garage underneath an office building with enclosed stairways and blind corners. This type of initiative was seen as an action oriented approach which helps neighbours, co-workers etc. get to know each other and generate practical solutions. In the process, experiences are shared, secrets are let out of the closet, people come to realize they are not alone, and isolation is decreased.

Further, safety audits were viewed very positively because they encourage those involved to explore the experiences of different types of people in the same situation. As a result they help increase sensitivity to different life experiences, and encourage greater tolerance of different ages, cultures and life styles.

Safety audits were also seen as a good way to start reducing fear because they promote knowledge among community members of how their community is run. By identifying the problem and then trying to find a solution, people begin to feel more in control of change. Power is demystified in the process as people discover that other

"ordinary" people frequently are "in charge" of these problems and can be influenced or involved in initiatives to help solve them.

Finally, safety audits were also favoured because they cost nothing and were potentially relevant to home, work, education, leisure, transit and parenting aspects of women's and men's lives. In fact, some participants suggested that parents could also arrange safety audits for their children to reduce the children's fears of walking home from school.

2. Improve Street Lighting

Initiatives to improve street lighting were probably the next most favoured action alternative by workshop participants. There was great interest in Edmonton's program to leave porch lights on. Like safety audits, porch light campaigns can be street, neighbourhood, community, or municipally based, they involve little or no fund raising problems, they are actions that "ordinary people" with no specialized knowledge can take, and they can effect significant change in the short term.

3. Create City or Town Task Forces on Fear and Safety

Perhaps because many cities, at the time of the workshops, had already set up such a task force, or were in the planning stages to create a Mayor's or City Task Force, participants generally thought this was a necessary and important step. Although some participants felt cynicism at the ability of such a task force to effect real change, or even to identify all the problems, there was a general feeling that such a task force would make a public statement of political will, and could help educate and mobilize more diverse sectors of the community around the issue than any other initiative besides an expensive media campaign.

4. Create a Community Based Organization to Address Fear and Safety Concerns

Although municipal government task forces were favoured, most participants did not want to leave the responsibility for implementation of the recommendations coming

out of such a task force up to city officials. Instead, most participants favoured a METRAC model, where a community-based organization works closely with the municipal government to effect change where appropriate, but also works with other community sectors and can act as a critic when needed.

5. Implement Widespread Education of Professionals

Because fear, violence and safety as well as responses to these realities cut across so many sectors of society, a strong plea was made by workshop participants to ensure that a broad range of professionals receive education around these issues. In no group was a detailed implementation plan for such education suggested. However, comments were made that transition house workers, workers in sexual assault centres, and other women as well as men with front-line experience and an in-depth understanding of women's fear and experiences of violence should be central to any educational programs. One participant suggested that provincial or territorial professional organizations should take responsibility for funding and arranging this education through universities and colleges and also through in-service training.

6. Encourage Active, Preventive Intervention to Reduce Schoolyard Violence

The issue of schoolyard violence helped stimulate discussion of the importance of preventive strategies to reduce violence in Canadian cities, towns and rural areas. Women and men involved in the workshops suggested that students from the preschool level up should be taught non-violent ways of resolving conflict, and should also be taught greater respect for one another. In the short-term, one workshop participant suggested that parents should approach school boards to suggest that parents assist in the monitoring of playgrounds to help reduce the amount of violence.

7. Take Action in Universities, Colleges and in Schools

There was a high level of concern about the violence on campuses as well as in primary and public schools. Participants suggested that solar lights should be used

wherever possible on bike paths on and off campus, that buddy systems should be set up for walking on campus, as well as to and from school, and that curricula at the school and university/college levels should be introduced to encourage more positive roles for men and women, and to educate girls and boys about the pervasiveness and unacceptability of violence in our society.

WHAT MORE COULD GOVERNMENTS BE DOING?

Once again, little discussion focussed around future government initiatives. Therefore, the points that follow are largely extrapolations from the comments and suggestions of workshop participants. The ideas below also reflect the knowledge gained by the author of this report on the government roles which community members seem to find most needed. No attempt is made to distinguish between different levels of government since many of the suggestions could apply to municipal, provincial/territorial or federal government departments.

1. Help Communities Better Identify their Problems and Needs

The workshops that were held, began or contributed to a dialogue which in all eight communities is still continuing. In some of these communities, the municipal government, or a social agency is helping to move the dialogue forward, but in others there is a real need for a more lengthy discussion and some hard facts about fear levels, neighbourhood-specific crime statistics, the perceptions and concerns of community participants, and the needs of the community. Governments can help further the dialogue by providing the resources and in some cases the expertise necessary to help interested community members continue to meet, and to generate concrete action plans based on solid information.

In communities where no initial workshop has been held but where there is an interest, governments should support such a workshop as a catalyst for future action. Interest has already been expressed in Saint John, New Brunswick, in Montreal, Quebec and in Edmonton, Alberta.

2. Promote Cross-Sector Dialogue

Community members recognized the need to involve a broad range of community members and groups in defining the problem and outlining the solutions. However, because of perceived power imbalances across different sectors of communities, because of stereotypes that different groups have of one another, and simply because different sectors are not accustomed to working together, some catalytic action is usually necessary to promote dialogue across sectors.

Governments can play an important role in promoting such dialogue through the sponsorship of cross-sectoral workshops and conferences around the issue, by providing incentive funding to encourage such dialogue or coordination across groups, and by supporting newsletters and research publications on fear and violence which are cross-sectoral in appeal and focus.

Grass roots groups expressed particular difficulty in persuading business sectors and some professional sector groups to take them seriously. Particular attention could be played to these combinations since all the above sectors are necessarily part of the solution.

3. Promote Cross-Cultural Awareness

Similarly, experiences of fear and violence are often most pronounced among people with disabilities, people who are members of visible minority groups, people who do not speak the dominant language or languages of their community and people who are discriminated against because of sexual orientation. A real focus is needed to understand better the experiences and needs of people who are especially vulnerable in communities because of race, colour, language, sexual orientation or disability. Education of service providers and the general public of the experiences and needs of community members who are part of a group especially vulnerable to fear and violence should then be initiated and supported. The particular needs of the elderly should also be included in any such educational effort since many seniors feel out of place and out of step with the dominant culture, and also often live with high levels of fear and the knowledge that violence could have devastating physical, psychological and financial consequences for them.

4. Ensure that Existing Services Which Assist Victims/Survivors of Violence and Which Do Preventive Work Receive Adequate Funding

Workshop participants frequently stressed the need for governments to be careful that in the excitement of a "new idea", they do not abandon support to essential services which are part of the new as well as the existing response to a problem.

Transition house workers, women's centre workers, and workers in sexual assault centres in particular expressed concern that the important work they do, which is very much part of a community's response to fear and violence experienced by women, will not be considered part of the new vision of the issue. These workers worry that they will lose funding in governments' search for innovation, and in the process the community will lose an important part of the needed response.

5. Provide Support for New Local Initiatives

Although workshop participants focussed a good deal on immediate action possibilities which require little or no funding, some of the longer term initiatives, including information gathering and research as well as program creation, would require funding and/or information resources. Governments could provide the resources needed to stimulate community action, and to realize community plans.

6. Provide Support to Encourage Interagency Coordination

Participants stressed that not only should different sectors and agencies be involved in the initial identification of the problem and the early plans for change, there would also be an ongoing need to create interdisciplinary and interagency initiatives to deal with the problem. Victims/survivors as well as perpetrators of violence frequently suffer from the fragmentation of services and approaches. Increasingly, service providers are recognizing that the interdisciplinary approach may be the only way to overcome this fragmentation.

Governments can support through: funding, workshops, research, training and publications, interdisciplinary approaches to various issues and problems. In the short

term, people in communities need "success stories" as reassurance that interdisciplinary coordination is really possible, and information on how to go about creating an interdisciplinary approach to service delivery, research or training.

7. Promote Community Development

The growing public concern with fear and violence in our society is mobilizing communities around prevention and intervention. This concern has the potential to pull communities together, to increase cooperation among neighbours, and generally to build communities through a very positive, change-oriented focus.

Governments could support and encourage this process by stimulating community development directly and through support of this issue. It was evident through these eight workshops that the benefits of much of the work aimed at reducing women's fear and violence against women, extended past the direct issue to community mobilization and community development. People concerned with fear and safety are often also frequently concerned with the isolation which occurs through community breakdown and which helps breed fear and violence. Community developers should be included in any dialogue around this issue and should be asked to suggest community development techniques which might enhance community efforts to reduce fear and violence.

8. Support and Promote Curriculum Development

The need for curriculum development not just to educate students from preschool to university levels about the prevalence and nature of violence in our society, but also to teach children and young people more positive, non-violent, respectful ways of interacting, was stressed in almost every workshop.

Governments could contribute greatly to the future prevention of violence by sponsoring the creation of such curricula in a coordinated way which involves disparate community agencies concerned with the issue of women's fear and safety as well as violence in our society more generally.

9. Help Influence the Media to Reduce Sexism and Violence

Participants in the workshops often felt that education should begin at very young ages. However, they were also adamant that massive public education on this issue is needed. There is a fear among women and men concerned to stop the violence, that even if media agrees to be involved in such a campaign, media attention will then be focussed on reducing fear and violence as a "special programming issue" only. Instead, participants stressed that media must be influenced to look seriously at the violence and sexism in their programming and to work diligently to significantly reduce portrayals of violence and to eliminate sexism.

Concern was also expressed that media treatment of violence against women and women's fear, even when dealt with as a "public concern" issue, is often sensationalized and does not help people see ways they can change these realities.

Women and men across Canada feel discouraged about trends in media programming and would like governments to step in to pressure media to change their standards and orientation.

10. Support the Development of Community-Based Forums and Organizations to Reduce Fear and Violence

There was much support for the creation of METRAC type organizations in other municipalities in Canada. Government funding would be needed for the creation and running of such agencies. Some participants also suggested that at the provincial/territorial, and national levels, there would be benefits in creating looser community advisory bodies to various levels of government on this issue. Some government support for such advisory groups would also be needed.

CONCLUSION

Participants in the eight workshops on which this report is based clearly communicated the need and the benefits of organizing action around reducing fear and violence against women. To women and men across Canada, the high levels of fear and violence which are a part of many women's lives today are unacceptable, and demand action. The people involved in these workshops recognize that this is a problem that affects women most directly, but that has implications for the safety, dignity and quality of life of every woman, man and child in Canada.

Fear, violence and safety are issues with implications that cut across age, gender, class, race and political boundaries. These are issues that must involve different jurisdictions, sectors, professions, and agencies in the search for solutions.

For the participants involved in these eight workshops, these are issues which must be addressed. These are issues around which something can be done. These are issues around which communities are already taking action. Violence is one "women's issue" which must become everyone's issue.

Reducing fear and violence is a public priority and a national necessity because it is a basic right. It is every woman's right to live free from fear and violence. We must take back our days as well as our nights.

Linda MacLeod

November, 1990.

APPENDIX

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