LOCAL NEEDS, LOCAL SOLUTIONS:
A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO
REGIONAL SERVICES FOR
VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

A Report Prepared for the
Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women Society
Hinton, Alberta

by the
Edmonton Social Planning Council
#41, 9912 -106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 1C5

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Research
Consultants
Peter Faid
and
Linda MacLeod

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1.0 Introduction

1.1   In 1988 the Board of Directors of the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter became increasingly concerned that the **Shelter was unable to provide equitable and accessible services to the major communities in the Yellowhead region.**   Statistics maintained by the Shelter showed that there was declining use of the Shelter's residential services by women from communities outside of Hinton.   Moreover, in 1987 the Shelter found that it was not able to continue with its outreach work to the major communities of the Yellowhead area.

1.2   Of particular concern to the Board were the **limitations** that **were placed upon the Shelter by the Basic Essential Services Funding Model** used by the provincial government to fund the operation of all shelters in the province.   The essential

services as defined by the model include fixed costs (administration, maintenance and facility costs), variable costs (client related costs such as food, household supplies and travel) and staffing costs (to include crisis intervention, counselling, emotional support, referral and child care). Consequently the cost of providing additional public education, outreach or support services to all communities in the Yellowhead Region could not be accommodated within the funding model. The Board therefore believed that the limitations placed on it by the funding model **significantly restricted its ability to meet its intended mandate,** and as a consequence, contributed to the declining use of the Shelter. At the same time, the opening of a satellite shelter in Grande Cache appeared to weaken the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter's mandate and some concern was expressed that this might jeopardize the existing level of provincial funding.

1.3 The Board then decided to approach the Wildrose Foundation to ask for financial support in order that the Shelter **could explore the question of how an effective regional service for victims of family violence might be developed.** As well as developing a viable regional model for the Yellowhead region, the Board appreciated that the opportunity to explore various alternatives could also be of considerable value to other regional shelters across the country. Once financial support was assured the Board of Directors approached a number of potential consultants and asked for proposals to conduct a needs assessment. A proposal submitted by the Edmonton Social Planning Council was accepted.

1.4 Following an initial meeting with the Shelter's staff and the

Executive of the Board, agreement was reached on the objectives of the needs assessment. These were as follows:

> To assess the needs of the individuals and families who are victims of family violence in Edson, Hinton, Grande Cache, Jasper and environs.

> To review the present services offered by the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter and the extent to which the Shelter has been able to meet the identified needs of those in the Yellowhead region who have been victims of family violence.

> To identify any additional services, and their related costs, that would improve the overall effectiveness of the Shelter and its ability to provide a programme of accessible integrated services throughout the region.

> To develop a proposal for funding that would allow the Shelter to initiate a pilot project intended to improve its ability to provide accessible services throughout the Yellowhead Region.

1.5 The initial meeting also identified the major questions that needed to be addressed by the needs assessment. These were as follows:

> Is there a commitment to the operation of a regional shelter in the various communities that the Shelter is expected to serve?

> To what extent has the Shelter become isolated from the various geographic communities as well as from the professional human service organizations in the region and what might be done to overcome this isolation?

> What accounts for the declining occupancy rates in the Shelter?

What can be done to assist women who need help but may be reluctant to leave their immediate communities?

What can be done to re-establish transportation links between the outlying communities and the Shelter?

How can staff turnover in the Shelter be minimized?

What can be done to see that other organizations and services in the region, as well as the general public, are familiar with the mandate, objectives and services of the Shelter?

Are there organizations and services in the region that may be prepared to provide support group programs for women and children who are battered, as well as for men who batter?

What services are needed in the region to support families that are anxious to stay together?

Would the re-establishment of a volunteer training program be of assistance in the present operation of the Shelter and in the development of any new services?

What are some of the 'non-residential' needs of victims of family violence and how might the Shelter best meet those needs on a regional basis?

Would the Shelter's objectives be better achieved by the introduction of outreach and follow up workers who would visit the various communities in the region on a regular basis?

What can be done about the very limited accommodation that is presently available for women who may wish to leave their husbands and relocate in the region?

How can the Shelter better meet the needs of the native population in the region?

How can the Shelter's capacity to provide drop-in

counselling or referrals be improved?

1.6 The various stages of the needs assessment included:

Telephone interviews with senior staff of other regional shelters in all provinces and territories of Canada.

Group interviews with the present staff and Board of Directors of the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter.

A series of focus group meetings with 'key informants' in the communities of Wildwood, Edson, Hinton, Grande Cache and Jasper. Participants were chosen from a wide range of health, social service, justice, church, and educational organizations in each community. Additional telephone interviews were conducted with 'key informants' who were unable to attend the proposed focus group meeting to which they had been invited.

A special focus group meeting was also held with women who had either previously used, or were presently using, the Shelter.

1.7 The structure of this report on the needs assessment begins with a brief analysis of the Shelter's first five years and the important conclusions that can be drawn from its experience. The results of the focus group discussions held in the various communities are then reviewed in detail, including any suggestions that might assist the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter to meet the needs of battered women in the particular community. The next section of the report reviews the major factors that are particularly critical in responding to the needs of rural women who are victims of family violence. This is followed by an assessment of the various options that have been introduced in other regional

shelters across the country. Finally the report concludes with a series of recommendations for the next five years which, if implemented, would enable the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter to provide more equitable and accessible services throughout the Yellowhead region.

2.0. Looking Back: The First Five Years

2.1 In a manner similar to that of other shelters in the province, the initial inspiration for the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter came from a **community workshop.** In the spring of 1983, human service professionals and concerned citizens came together to discuss the growing problem of wife battering. A small **Steering Committee of community people** was established and given the task of identifying potential solutions to the problem. It was their **recommendation that an emergency shelter providing crisis intervention to women and children who are victims of family violence be established in Hinton.** The Steering Committee's research showed that while the population base of Hinton and environs was perhaps not sufficient to warrant a separate shelter, a very strong argument could be made for **providing a regional shelter to assist battered women and their children in the communities of Hinton, Edson, Jasper, Grande Cache and the surrounding villages and rural communities in the Yellowhead region.** It was also evident to the Steering Committee that neither the existing social service agencies nor the judicial system was in a position to adequately meet the growing needs of women and children who are battered.

2.2 The first **Board of Directors** for the new shelter was elected in January 1984, with representation from the participating communities. Encouraged by the broad public

support that was much in evidence: from municipal officials, school principals, lawyers, hospital administrators, doctors, social service agencies and church leaders, the Board of Directors set about with enthusiasm to plan for the new shelter. The major goals of the Board were initially to obtain the funds that would be required to establish and operate the shelter, to investigate the building of a shelter or the purchase and renovation of an existing structure, and to determine the staffing requirements for the new shelter. Working through a series of committees the Board also saw that it was important to establish operating policies and procedures, to identify opportunities for involving volunteers, to establish effective lines of communication with a wide range of service providers in the various communities, and to plan public education opportunities with respect to both the broad issue of family violence and the proposed role of the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter.

2.3   As a result of excellent community cooperation and support, both financial and in kind, the **Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women was officially opened in October 1985.** The demands of operating the new Shelter were eased somewhat with the introduction by the Minister of Social Services of the Basic Essential Services Funding Model for all shelters. This allowed for the hiring of additional staff that were very necessary, given the growing profile of the Shelter in the community. However, considering the large geographical area that it was expected to serve, the number of staff employed by the Shelter was still very limited.

2.4 During the first few years of the Shelter's existence, the Board of Directors and the staff also worked to clarify the society's philosophy and mission. The Shelter's current philosophy and mission statement are as follows:

Philosophy

The Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women Society is committed to the belief that every man, woman and child possesses the inalienable right to a life free from emotional and/or physical abuse. Furthermore, we firmly believe in the competence and potential of the family unit (or equivalent support system) as a vehicle to promote and enhance the intrinsic values, dignity and growth of each of its members.

Mission Statement

We consider all participants in the domestic violence drama to be victims and as such, each is in need of and deserves support and services that are directed towards the effects of living in a violent home. Not only does the quality of life suffer in the family experiencing a pattern of violence, but the quality of life in our community as a whole also suffers.

Within this framework, and within our mandate to provide refuge to abused women and children as our first priority, the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women Society endeavors to provide a wide range of services to meet the multiple and varied needs of both victims of family violence and the community. Services to clients are provided to facilitate crisis resolution and to enable people to develop and select real alternatives within a more personally aware and informed framework. Services to the community are provided to facilitate an increased public and professional awareness of the problem, and to motivate and support others in their efforts to deal

with family violence as a public issue.

2.5 **Volunteers** were expected to play an important role in the development of the Shelter. Twelve training sessions for volunteers in Edson were held over a two month period in early 1986. A **Friends of YES group** was also established in Edson with the expectation that its members would form part of a regional community network to assist the Shelter with fundraising and public education. A similar Friends of YES group was set up in Hinton, where its primary activity was fundraising bingos. In all, about seventy volunteers offered their help. The initial enthusiasm for volunteer support in the work of the Shelter saw the establishment of three training programmes to provide in-house support under the direction of senior staff. However in 1987 it was decided to put the programme 'on hold' until financial resources were in place to enable the Shelter to hire a part time volunteer coordinator. It has not been subsequently re-established.

2.6 In 1987 the decision was made to implement a **Children's Crisis Counselling and Support programme** in the Shelter, complete with a training programme, performance standards and an evaluation process. However, the most significant adjustment for the Shelter occurred in August 1988 when the **first Executive Director resigned** her position. The process of finding a replacement Executive Director took the Board until May 1989. During the nine months that the Shelter was without an Executive Director, an existing member of the staff assumed extra administrative responsibilities as Interim Coordinator. In addition,

during 1988 the Shelter was involved in recruiting staff to replace six crisis workers who resigned during the year. Furthermore, the outreach counselling programme that had been the responsibility of the Executive Director was also discontinued early in 1988.

2.7 Besides the provincial funding received by the Shelter on the basis of the essential services funding model (in 1988-89 $191,000 or 82% of revenue) **additional fundraising activities** were undertaken by the Board of Directors. The amounts raised from funding and donations in the past four years are:

1985-86	$37,748
1986-87	$21,600
1987-88	$18,867
1988-89	$24,731

This suggests that the initial responsiveness of the community to the Shelter was not maintained in the following two years. However, a major fundraising drive conducted by a Committee of the Board in 1988-89 resulted in a significant increase.

2.8 The Board of the Shelter also receives **Community Service Grants** from the Family & Community Support Services programmes, and in 1988, these were received in Hinton ($6,000), Edson ($6,515), and Jasper ($3,000). These monies are presently used to support the activities of the Board, by meeting travel and telephone expenses, costs of attendance at conferences, etc. However, it is understood that given the 'preventive' purpose of FCSS funding grants, it was originally anticipated that a significant portion would be used to support the public education activities of the

Shelter.   The Board has also made clear their belief that Board expenses are 'essential services' and should therefore be met from the funding provided by Alberta Family & Social Services.

2.9   While it would be inappropriate to place too much reliance on **service utilization figures** as a means of evaluating the operation of the Shelter, such figures can reflect broad trends that are helpful in understanding the operation of the Shelter during the past five years.   The following table on the next page indicates patterns of service utilization for the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter from 1986 to July 1989.

2.9.1   The residential and non residential services offered by the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter, as well as the home location of all users, in each year since 1986 are shown in the table.   It suggests that **both residential and non-residential services tend to drop off, or increase, together.** For example, between 1987 and 1988 there was a fifty percent (50%) drop in the number of residential services provided to women and their children and a twenty-five percent (25%) drop in non-residential calls or drop in visits.   In 1989, when residential services showed a twenty-five percent (25%) increase in numbers, non-residential calls also improved by seventeen percent (17%).

2.9.2   The table also shows that **women and children from Hinton have been the most dominant users of the Shelter** (almost two-thirds of the 'bed nights') while utilization

SERVICE UTILIZATION PATTERNS
FOR THE YELLOWHEAD EMERGENCY SHELTER

	1986	1987	1988	1989
				(estimated from Jan. to July figures)
Residential Services for women & children	199	1635	834	1030
Percentage Year to year change		+720%	-49%	+24%
Home location of residential users by percentage				
Hinton	54.0	38.0	67.0	63.0
Edson	19.0	31.0	16.0	9.0
Jasper	5.0	7.0	0.5	2.0
Improvement District 14	15.0	11.0	0.5	18.0
Other	7.0	13.0	16.0	8.0
Non Residential Services (Telephone enquiries & walk-ins)	914	2,135	1,269	1,480
Percentage year to year change		+133%	-40%	+17%
Home location of non-residential users by percentage				
Hinton	46.0	60.0	65.0	64.0
Edson	20.0	26.0	23.0	18.0
Jasper	11.0	7.0	4.0	4.0
Improvement District 14	15.0	5.0	4.0	5.0
Other	8.0	2.0	4.0	8.0

Unit of Service is a 'bed-night'.

by women and children from Edson has dropped from about a third in 1987 to less than ten percent (10%) in 1989. Jasper residents have also tended to use the Shelter less since it first opened. In contrast, women and children from Improvement District Fourteen (14) made greater use of the Shelter for residential services during 1989.

2.9.3 Hinton's domination of the Shelter is also evident with respect to **non-residential services,** with again almost two-thirds of the calls coming from this community. The pattern of non-residential calls from Edson has remained relatively stable at a little less than twenty-five percent (25%). However, calls from residents in both Jasper and the Improvement District Fourteen (14) have remained low throughout the past four years.

2.10 Following their initial year of service to battered women and their children, the Board of Directors became concerned that the **Shelter had not been as effective as had been originally proposed in providing equitable services, both residential and non residential, to all communities of the Yellowhead Region.** In particular, it was felt that the 'basic essential services funding model' did not make sufficient allowance for the very high transportation and telephone costs involved in responding to the needs of battered women and their children across the Yellowhead region. It had already proven difficult for the Shelter to provide non-residential services and support in each of the major communities which the Shelter was expected to serve. It was in fact

this particular concern that encouraged the Board of Directors to seek funding for the needs assessment.

2.11 In reviewing the first five years of the operation of the Shelter, a number of significant conclusions can be drawn.

The fact that the Shelter was 'open for business' within two years of the formation of the original Steering Committee is evidence of the considerable commitment and goodwill that existed in the participating communities towards the Shelter.

It is no easy task to start a new shelter 'from the ground up', especially one whose mandate extends over a broad geographic area. The Shelter staff and the Boards of Directors who were involved during the first few years should be commended for their dedication and hard work.

The loss of the Shelter's first Executive Director, coupled with the extended length of time it took to find a replacement, has taken its toll on the development of the Shelter's services and its presence in the community.

There is an evident link between non-residential and residential services, with the result that as non-residential contacts have increased or decreased, residential use of the Shelter's services have moved in a similar direction.

The use of the Shelter during the first five years, especially with respect to residential services, has been dominated by residents from Hinton, with fewer contacts being made by women from other communities.

The decision to discontinue the volunteer programme has had a negative impact on the perception of the Shelter in the community.

Transporting women and their children to the Shelter

in Hinton from other communities has continued to be a major problem.

Maintaining Board representation from all of the communities served by the Shelter has been an ongoing difficulty, although representation from Edson and the Improvement District has always been good.

The basic essential services model for shelter funding has limited the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter's ability to respond to the needs of all victims of family violence in the Yellowhead region.

2.12   The importance of several of these conclusions was reiterated in focus groups conducted across the Yellowhead region. A report on these focus groups, held in Wildwood, Edson, Hinton, Jasper, and Grande Cache is the subject of the section which follows.

3.0 Family Violence: Perspectives from the Yellowhead Region

3.1 In carrying out the needs assessment over a wide geographic area in a limited period of time, it was decided that the most useful approach would be **to involve the Directors of the FCSS programmes** in the communities of Wildwood, Edson, Hinton, Grande Cache and Jasper. The Directors were asked if they would be prepared to **organize a focus group meeting in their community.** To this meeting they would invite a wide range of people who would be familiar either with the problems encountered by victims of family violence in the area or with the various human services that were presently available. All five Directors enthusiastically agreed to assist. The objectives of the needs assessment were carefully explained and potential participants were identified. These included people drawn from the health professions, the legal profession, the RCMP, the justice system, church groups, educational system, business and labour groups, native organizations, women's groups, mental health, social service and addictions prevention organizations, and local non-profit human service organizations. Despite a tight time frame, participation in all communities was very good. A list of all participants is included as an appendix.

3.2 An important guiding principle throughout the research was that the needs, expectations, available services and potential

solutions of **each individual community** be recognised and **addressed.** There are no ultimate solutions to the delivery of services on a regional basis, and therefore it is imperative to seek out creative alternatives that will best meet the needs that are identified by those who live and work in the particular community.

3.3 What follows is the summary of the focus group discussions in each of the five communities. In order to present the information in the most useful format the comments have been prepared under five headings:

Community Characteristics

Existing Services

Identified Needs

Barriers to Change

Proposed Solutions

While the responses of the focus group participants were arranged under these headings, every effort was made to keep the tone of each meeting as unchanged as possible, in order to reflect accurately the concerns and recommendations of those who participated.

3.4 WILDWOOD

3.4.1   Community   Characteristics

The various communities in the Wildwood 'catchment area' (Evansburg, Entwhistle, Carrot Creek, Niton Junction) were described as being generally **poor with high levels of unemployment.** As one participant described it, "if there's no work then its welfare, welfare and welfare."

As regards family violence, it was suggested that the **community is a rather closed** one which seldom admits to having any significant family problems. The public perception is therefore that family violence is not a major issue in the area. However, for those involved with human service agencies, **abuse in families was simply a hidden problem** that had never been publicly acknowledged.

Generally, people in the community who were in need of any particular service that was not available locally would be more likely to travel to Edmonton than remain in the region. Consequently, women who decided to leave an abusive relationship would probably **prefer to go to Edmonton,** where job opportunities, retraining courses, housing and anonymity were more likely to be found, rather than remain in the community on welfare.

3.4.2   Existing Services

There are **only a few** services available locally for the Wildwood area. **Mental Health** offers counselling services, but the staff involved were thought to be badly overburdened with other responsibilities. There was also the view that those working for **human service agencies** felt that they worked very much in isolation from each other. **AADAC** also provides **counselling** as part of its general alcohol and drug treatment programmes, but has nothing specifically related to family violence.

There is **very little public education** undertaken in Wildwood on the topic of family violence, **nor are there opportunities for in-service training for health care professionals.** AADAC currently runs several education programmes in the schools on substance abuse, but only touches incidentally on the subject of battering.

Because of the lack of specific services for victims of family violence, the **R.C.M.P. receives a good number of calls during the night** from women wanting help. While the police will respond to a call where it is apparent that a woman's life is in danger they are **not able to provide transportation for women** seeking to leave abusive husbands, because staff are not available and there is an issue of police liability.

A local society already provides transportation for seniors and the handicapped. As well it co-ordinates a volunteer network. A representative of the group indicated that there was a willingness to assist in an emergency but that there was little likelihood that they would be able to establish a new service to assist women and their children.

At present, therefore, most victims of family violence in the Wildwood area are left to seek practical and emotional support from their extended families or possibly from their neighbours.

3.4.3 Identified Needs

There was a general view expressed by the focus group participants that the present Shelter in Hinton was quite 'invisible', and therefore much more needed to be done in the Wildwood communities to promote the presence of the Shelter and of its services.

There was also a need in the area for greater availability of public information and referral services for women who are victims of family violence. One proposal mentioned was for an information and referral phoneline, with a well-publicized telephone number, that could provide referrals or information on transportation possibilities for women who were anxious to leave an abusive relationship. Considering the size of the community, it was suggested that a service from

outside the community would be preferred as it would be more likely to provide confidential assistance and information. A further idea was for a small resource centre to be established in a suitable public location that could provide materials on family violence issues or regional services available to victims of family violence.

The need to improve the availability of family counselling and support services was also mentioned. Existing services in Wildwood are already overburdened and are unable to deal with clients from outside the immediate Wildwood community. It was hoped that the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter might, in time, be able to provide counselling services on a regular basis in the area for women who are battered.

Although participants had difficulty in identifying the extent of the need, it was generally believed that there should be counselling programmes available for men who batter and for children who had been abused.

Providing transport for women wishing to leave abusive husbands in times of crisis was seen as an obvious need.

3.4.4   Barriers to Change

Attitudinal, systemic, organizational and practical barriers to change were identifed during the group discussion. It was felt

that the **community in general did not see family violence as an important issue.** Women who had been battered were often quite reluctant to leave their husbands, believing that "It's my problem and I have to solve it". Even when women had been referred to the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter there was a real reluctance to follow through because of the pressure of community values and attitudes to preserve the status quo.

There was a concern expressed that often the **criminal justice system appears to harm women who have been abused** more than it appears to help them. As one participant commented: "Women are doing more 'time' than the accused".

While most of the group involved in the discussion **did not feel that dealing with issues of family violence was directly within their mandate,** they felt that they sometimes had to get involved because of the obvious need. This 'back-door approach' left some organizations, such as the RCMP, the FCSS and AADAC, feeling that they could not afford to spend too much time, or money responding to family violence issues. However a benefit to this approach was that it **left an opportunity for more flexibility in providing services.**

Finally, there were practical barriers to change. Foremost among these were staff limitations. Most of the groups involved said that they **did not have sufficient staff to**

cover the added burden of dealing with family violence. A high rate of **staff turnover** also created a practical problem of continuity in services.

3.4.5 Proposed Solutions

It was proposed that the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter, with the help of local agencies, provide **an aggressive programme of public education** about the problems of family violence and the available services provided by the Shelter. It was suggested that other agencies and professionals in the community would be prepared to get involved in such a campaign if the **Yellowhead Emergency Shelter was able to take a leadership role** in the necessary training and in public presentations.

The group agreed with the suggestion that a small **Resource Centre**, perhaps located in a 'neutral location', such as the FCSS office, would be a very helpful point of contact for women who needed assistance.

If possible, the Shelter could use the Resource Centre as a 'touch-point' in the community so that **an outreach worker** could provide **individual counselling** on a scheduled basis to women. In addition, the Outreach Worker could encourage the **establishment of self-help support groups**, if there was sufficient interest, or help existing organizations, such as churches, to set up programmes that would offer a supportive

environment for women who needed help.

A final suggestion was the long-term possibility of opening a satellite shelter or some safe houses in the Wildwood area that would connect to the Shelter in Hinton.

3.4.6   Summary of Findings

Wildwood offers only limited economic opportunities; family violence is usually hidden; and human service agencies are usually sought in Edmonton.

Existing counselling services are overburdened; no public education programme on family violence is cuurently available; and while practical support exists, it is neither well known nor well utilized.

A real need exists for information about family violence, and about services offered by the Shelter.

Barriers to change include: community attitudes, 'the system', restrictions in mandates of organizations, and limited resources.

Suggested changes included: a public education campaign, the improvement of counselling services, the use of an outreach worker, and the establishment of a local Resource Centre; all requiring significant

input and leadership from the Yellowhead Emergency
Shelter.

3.5. EDSON

3.5.1   Community Characteristics

Edson is a town with a population of about 7300, and an active industrial base. Unemployment is similar to the provincial average at about ten percent (10%). Around Edson is a largely agricultural population. There is a small (5%) native population in Edson; however, they are not a homogeneous community, and do not have a reserve.

Community leaders seem **generally aware of the problem and occurrence of family violence** in Edson, but are **divided as to how best to handle it.** Schools especially are seeing and reporting many victims of family violence.

3.5.2   Existing Services

Participants in the focus group were reasonably familiar with the work of the Shelter in Hinton, but there was very limited current contact. Partly as a result of this, services to victims of family violence has become rather piecemeal.

At present there is **some counselling for women who are battered** available through **Mental Health** services, but the waiting period is lengthy. **AADAC** also does some counselling on issues of family violence, and does make referrals. **Public**

health nurses and the native worker in Social Services are in contact with native women who have been abused. The ministers of local churches generally feel unable to provide any on-going counselling related to the issues of family violence.

Other programmes exist for **practical support,** but again these are not well co-ordinated. **The Friends of YES** in Edson help to raise funds for the Shelter and do some public education. Existing **women's groups** offer peer support. AADAC provides some information on battering, as well as giving referrals for shelter and transportation services. **Anger control** groups have been run by Mental Health **for men who batter,** but none of the groups are presently running. Other groups expressed interest in becoming involved in any further support activities that might be developed.

3.5.3 Identified Needs

More information about the existence of the Shelter, its services and its **toll-free phoneline** were identified as major needs in the Edson area.

Better co-ordinated emotional support services for all victims of family violence was a further concern discussed by the focus group. Important in this respect was the need for well-trained professionals who could offer in-depth counselling on issues such as anger management, self-esteem and assertiveness. The value of personal face-to-face contact

was emphasized.

To support these professional counselling programmes, it was suggested that Edson would also need **well-trained volunteers as friendly and supportive listeners.** A further proposal was that the community could train **volunteer advocates** to help women through the court process.

While the Shelter in Hinton was felt to be useful in extreme cases of family violence, most of the participants felt that **Edson's local community resources,** intended to help women who are battered, **needed to be strengthened.** The possibility of a **local 'safe place',** where women from the Edson area could go on a short-term basis without the major step of leaving their community, was discussed.

It was also agreed that **additional programmes are needed for children** who are victims of family violence and **for men who batter.**

3.5.4   Barriers to Change

The major barriers identified were community attitudes towards domestic violence, restricted mandates of existing organizations and the problem of limited resources.

It was suggested that community attitudes are such that there

is still a stigma attached to going to a shelter. Therefore this action represents too big a step for many women to take, and they are left to make use of what support they can find in their own extended families. It was also mentioned that women often did not go to the Shelter in Hinton because they did not want to leave town. It was felt that women would only take the step to leave Edson when they had made up their minds to leave their partners for good.

One comment offered during the discussion was that more pressure needed to be put on the batterer to change when women remained in the family, rather than putting the onus for action and change primarily on the woman.

A further attitude barrier identifed in the discussion was with reference to native women. It was suggested that there is little on-going contact between native women and other women in the Edson area and as a result there was only a limited appreciation of the problems faced by native women who were battered. The present Shelter was also thought not to be very accessible to native women.

Transportation difficulties also surfaced during the discussion. There was concern about confidentiality in transporting women to the Shelter in Hinton, because the Edson community is still rather small. Other issues raised concerned the role of the police in Edson in transporting women to a safer location. The Police representatives present expressed

their preference to 'diffuse' the situation, taking women to family or friends and talking to the parties, rather than laying charges. The hospital had sometimes admitted women overnight in order to offer them some protection, but it was noted that this was not possible if the women have children with them.

A final issue discussed concerned the use of volunteers. It was suggested that **volunteers do not seem to be greatly utilized in service delivery in the Edson area,** perhaps because there were few opportunities to provide the necessary training. In additon, there was some anxiety about issues of **liability** when using volunteers. However, others in the discussion felt that only trained professionals could meet many of the needs of women who are battered.

3.5.5   Proposed   Solutions

There was the suggestion in the focus group that the kinds of services which the Shelter had previously offered in Edson needed to be restored. **The Shelter was seen to have a critical role in providing overall leadership in the Edson community** pertaining to matters concerning family violence, especially with respect to training and public education.

Public education was stressed as a high priority. It was thought that with suitable training, the Friends of YES could

assist with public education in the schools and with community groups. The Shelter could also provide information on family violence to other service providers through **an active inter-agency committee** specifically concerned with services for victims of family violence. One interesting idea was to print small business cards with information about the Shelter and its services which could be handed out discreetly to women when they contacted other services in the community.

There was support for the idea of an **Outreach Worker from the Shelter visiting Edson on a regular basis** to provide counselling, information, and referrals. If this is done, it should be made available in a 'neutral' location, such as the Family Centre. If possible, the outreach activity should involve a trained therapist, who might also be able to work with children.

It was mentioned that the Shelter should be able to **involve other members of the Edson community** in its work, if the effort could be made to establish the necessary contacts. Possibly a lawyer or **a team of lawyers** could be established to offer legal advice to women on a volunteer basis. **Additional volunteers** could be trained to provide support or transportation to the Shelter in Hinton.

It was also proposed that the Shelter should make a concerted effort to **connect with service providers in the native community**, with the hope that it might be possible to

establish a co-operative outreach programme. A further suggestion was that the Board of Directors should include a native person or someone who is familiar with the needs of native women.

3.5.6   Summary of Findings

The problems associated with family violence are recognized in the community, but the availability of services is limited.

There is a need for better counselling and support services for victims of family violence; for more volunteers to provide support and assistance; for a balance between professional and volunteer help; and for a safe location while waiting for transportation or assistance.

Proposed solutions stress the need for locally based services with consistent and regular contact with the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter. The importance of a strong inter-agency committee and active support from professionals in the community is well recognized.

3.6 HINTON

3.6.1 Community Characteristics

Hinton is a community with a population of approximately 8000, and the town's **major economic activity is linked to the local pulp mill.** Changing workforce requirements result in a somewhat transient population, and the availability of housing ebbs and flows with the economic changes.

Despite an active public education campaign in previous years, those involved in the discussion believed that there is still **much denial about the problem of family violence in Hinton.** While service providers appear to be well informed about the Shelter and are generally supportive, the view was expressed that **support in the general community for the Shelter had waned over the last few years.**

It was suggested that in the community there is still much **anger directed at the victims of family violence.** Women who try to deal with husbands who batter are often made to feel that they are somehow to blame. They report loss of peer support and say that they are often **encouraged** to **drop charges against their husbands.**

3.6.2 Existing Services

The Shelter is generally not well known in the community, although service providers indicate that they make referrals to it. Donations in cash and in kind from the community continue to be received by the Shelter, indicating some degree of public awareness.

Hinton already has a well-established reputation for its work in public education about family violence, although it was agreed that more that can always be done on an on-going basis. Each year there is a supplement in the local newspaper about family violence, while brochures and other written information are generally available at service delivery locations.

Some counselling and self-help support groups are available in the community, although long waiting lists are a continual problem. **Provincial Mental Health Services offer individual counselling** and they hope also to organize support groups for child and adult survivors of sexual abuse. There are **many existing support groups for adolescents** in the community, including an Alateen group, a peer support group at the local school, self-esteem groups offered by the Boys and Girls Club, and suicide prevention groups for teens. **Local ministers offer individual counselling,** mainly for married couples, although there are limitations with respect to training and available time.

Housing for women who have left their partners is **seldom available** in Hinton, especially in the twelve units of subsidized housing in town. Vacancy rates in these units are very much dependent on the level of employment activity in the mills.

3.6.3 Identified Needs

Discussion of continuing public education initiatives touched on a number of possibilities. It was felt that **more work still needs to be done in sensitizing staff of service agencies in the community to the problems and issues of family violence.** It was felt that public education has to eliminate the myths about family violence, emphasizing both physical and emotional abuse, and the fact that the threat of physical abuse can be as psychologically damaging to the woman involved.

There were a number of suggestions made with respect to the **different types of counselling needed for victims of family violence in Hinton.** These included self-help groups for battered women, groups for battered children, and for non-battered children of battered women. Counselling for the perpetrators was also identified as a need, as were services for battered men. An evident need that was identified was for **more marriage counselling.** Apart from the support offered by some of the churches, little other practical help is available.

A mention was made of the importance of re-establishing an inter-agency committee that had previously been active in Hinton. It was felt that this had been a positive way of bringing concerned professionals together. The re-establishment of such a committee would help improve the working relationships between the different agencies and organizations concerned with family violence issues.

It was also suggested that perhaps more on-going training of Shelter staff and volunteers was needed in the area of legal rights. Participants also felt that women who are victims of family violence could benefit from more personal contact in the Shelter with a single individual, rather than a number of different staff members.

3.6.4   Barriers to Change

Concerns were expressed about the present image of the Shelter in the community. There is the always-present perception that the Shelter was run by a 'bunch of feminists' who were determined to prevent women from reconciling with their husbands or partners. It was also suggested that the image of the Shelter in the minds of women who were potential clients is rather negative. Comments were made about how regimented life was at the Shelter and that a women would need to be desperate before she would consider going to stay at the Shelter. There

was also the view expressed that some women would prefer to leave town altogether, if trying to get away from abusive husbands, rather than remain in Hinton.

Another barrier to effective service delivery in Hinton mentioned is that clients sometimes **set one agency against another**, with the result that **contact between agencies became less frequent** and the number of referrals has therefore declined significantly.

A further point raised was that it is important for the **Shelter not to get caught up 'in the numbers game'**, where the success of the Shelter is being measured on the basis of 'bed-nights'. Instead it was very important that the regional responsibilities of the Shelter be recognized and appreciated.

Another identifed barrier at the moment is the limited **access to the Shelter by native women.** It was suggested that the problem of family violence in native communities is as widespread although more likely to remain hidden. Having a **native staff person in the Shelter** was thought to be an excellent way of ensuring that native women felt welcomed. It might also be possible to attract native volunteers to the Shelter.

3.6.5 Proposed Solutions

The main area for improvement identifed, however, is with

respect to the Shelter's ongoing, day-to-day relationships with other agencies, groups, and services in the community. It was proposed that an active, well-supported **Interagency Services Committee** would be an appropriate way of involving professionals and other service deliverers with the Shelter.

It was also felt that the Shelter should take greater leadership in the community in promoting more public education and awareness about the problems of family violence. In particular, Family Violence Month (November of each year) should continue to be used by the Shelter to launch a public education campaign in order to correct misconceptions about battering. An additional suggestion was for the **establishment of a Speakers' Bureau**, which would include both men and women who had received the necessary training to allow them to speak to groups in the community about the problems of family violence and the work of the Shelter.

There was support for re-establishing a volunteer **programme for the Shelter** in order that trained volunteers could assist the Shelter with child care, transportation, telephone referrals and emotional support for women who were presently in the Shelter.

A final concern was that more effort needs to be made to see that **subsidized housing** was available in the community for women who needed a new place to live after

leaving the Shelter.

3.6.6 Summary of Findings

There has been a regular public education campaign on family violence, but there is still a denial that family violence is a problem, and anger is still directed at women who charge their husbands.

Besides the Shelter's services, other help is available for battered women in the community, but it is seldom well-coordinated, and on-going relationships between other community agencies and the Shelter is hesitant and uncertain.

A need exists for more public information on family violence and the services of the Shelter; for more educational opportunities with professionals; for additional counselling services; and for self-help support groups.

More work is required to change the Shelter's image in the community, so that professionals and service providers are more familar with its services and women in the community have a more positive feeling towards it.

The Shelter needs to re-establish its volunteer

programme and make a greater effort to attract native volunteers and staff.

3.7. JASPER

3.7.1 Community Characteristics

Jasper is a **wealthy, transient community dependent upon tourism.** Because it is situated in a National Park, renting is more common than owning homes. There are **few social services based in the town** and there have recently been cut-backs to those services that are there.

Jasper also has the **image of a 'party' town** where social problems such as family violence tend to be hidden. The rather transient nature of the community also makes it likely that those who become unwitting victims of family violence often move on even if problems are identified. Those women that seek shelter often prefer to go farther away, to Calgary or Kamloops, rather than stay in the Jasper area.

3.7.2 Existing Services

The major problem with the **existing social services** is that the majority of them are **provided on a 'visiting basis'** only. Staff cuts often mean that services to Jasper are further reduced, despite the fact that they are already overburdened.

Some of the existing services for victims of family violence include: a psychologist for the region, an Employee Assistance Programme, run by the Parks Service, a Mental

Health programme, three hours a week, as well as some individual counselling by ministers in local churches. Also, an AADAC representative visits Jasper on a regular basis, and an Alanon group has recently been formed.

Members of the focus group were also aware of an interdisciplinary committee for mental health care in Jasper. Concerns were expressed, however, about its effectiveness.

3.7.3   Identified   Needs

The major concern expressed by the Jasper focus group is the need for better and more regular services, from Alberta Family and Social Services and Mental Health Services. It was also apparent that family and marital counselling are badly needed in Jasper.

With respect to family violence issues, it was suggested that much more education is required, not only to the general public, but to also service professionals. Further information on the Shelter and its services should be more widely available throughout Jasper. Follow-up support care in cases of family violence was also seen as being especially important in Jasper, along with better co-ordination of services between agencies.

3.7.4   Barriers to Change

A significant barrier to dealing with family violence in Jasper is its **apparent invisibility**. Few people appear willing to examine the problem, since Jasper's tourist industry depends on the town being seen as a 'fun place'.

It was also suggested that in Jasper those involved in family violence tend to be **young and without children**. Frequently, **alcohol and drugs play a large part in the difficulties**. Often the couple separates, without dealing with the issue, and one of the couple may move away.

3.7.5   Proposed Solutions

The focus group participants readily agreed that they **could not depend on the existing service providers** to address the needs of victims of family violence in Jasper. Instead, it was felt that **new local initiatives would be required**, along with support from the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter.

Again, **more public information** on family information and the services of the Shelter were requested. In addition, a further proposal suggested the **need for additional funding to provide a local person**, or perhaps an outreach worker from the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter, to offer emotional and practical support to women in crisis.

Another idea proposed was to establish a **short-term crisis facility** in Jasper, possibly at the local hospital. The local worker could then be 'on call' to provide further assistance such as transportation to the Shelter in Hinton. Participants also agreed that a useful solution would be to see that **a day care facility** was available to provide a place for children whose mothers were being battered.

Because the federal government has jurisdiction over the National Parks, members of the focus group felt that the **government should be responsible for contributing to the funding** of counselling facilities and services. For these services, the use of trained professionals was preferred, since some members of the group felt uncomfortable with using volunteers.

3.7.6   Summary of Findings

Jasper's image as a 'fun' place means that family violence remains a hidden problem within the general community.

Existing services are quite limited: with few services to assist those involved with family violence.

Suggested solutions included: a scheme for an outreach worker, a crisis centre at the local hospital, and funding from the FCSS and the federal government.

3.8 GRANDE CACHE

3.8.1 Community Characteristics

Grande Cache is a **relatively young town**, one which grew out of the economic boom in Alberta during the 1970s. It is an industrial community that has attracted a **young, transient population** from other parts of Canada by the possibilities of steady employment. Consequently, many of the families have **no extended family members** in the near vicinity.

The **native population** of the Grande Cache region have lived in the area for at least eighty years. Notably, there are **strong family bonds** in the native community.

Substance (**alcohol and drug**) **abuse** appears to be a problem in Grande Cache, thereby often compounding other family issues. As one focus group participant commented, "We see a lot of kids kept up all night to entertain or serve drinking parents".

3.8.2 Existing Services

A small **shelter** has been established in Grande Cache, and although it is not open twenty-four hours a day, emergency assistance is always available. Recently the Shelter received **provincial funding as a Satellite Shelter** which will mean an extension of the period that women are able to stay at the

Shelter.

The Shelter in Grande Cache has also received short-term federal funding under the the Candian Job Strategy programme which has enabled it to hire a number of additional staff for new programmes. In particular, the Shelter will now be able to have two workers in the native community, involved with substance counselling and life-skills training, and two more assisting with outreach, counselling, and preventive work with schools and families.

To date, much of the crisis work of the Shelter has been carried out by volunteers. In addition, volunteers have been involved in providing advocacy, follow-up support, along with providing support groups for adolescents and for single-parents. Under the new provincial funding arrangements, the work of the volunteers is expected to continue, especially in acting as support and back-up workers once the hours are extended.

Other human services in the community that are likely to offer support to women in crisis are rather limited, although the Mental Health Services expressed interest in establishing a support group for women.

3.8.3   Identified   Needs

Despite the services already available, Grande Cache focus group participants identified several other areas of need. These are all generally in the area of back-up support.

Emotional support could be improved, including **support and counselling for emotionally battered women,** long-term counselling for battered women (presently only available in Grande Prairie or Edmonton), and counselling for men who batter (currently the nearest service of that type is in Grande Prairie).

Practical support could be extended to help women after charges are laid, and to care for children of violent homes (food, sleep, etc.). **Support** could also be extended to Shelter **workers** who sometimes feel isolated and overburdened.

3.8.4   Barriers to Change

Many of the difficulties associated with the services provided by Grande Cache sheltering are of a practical nature. **Geography** makes it difficult to get to Hinton. Only one bus leaves Grande Cache daily, departing at 6:30 a.m. In the winter, highways are dangerous. The R.C.M.P. have said that they cannot transport women to Hinton.

If women wish to seek help, they are **reluctant to go to**

Hinton for other reasons. Few women see themselves as part of a larger community extending to Hinton. Because so few women have family in Grande Cache, if they seek shelter, they either want to stay in Grande Cache with the hope of reconciliation with their husband, or want to travel back to their own families, often elsewhere in Canada. Consequently, when women are referred to the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter, they often choose not to go.

The attitudes of some members of the public also make it difficult for women to access help. There is a general **stigma attached to counselling**, especially long-term counselling. Few individuals will accept the counselling of church ministers. Mental health services are able to provide some counselling in cases of family violence. There is also a **denial of the effects of emotional battering**, which may be as serious as physical battering, and so there are no services for those women.

3.8.5 Proposed Solutions

Again, Grande Cache focus group participants had a generally clear vision of improvements which could be made to the current services available, and of ways in which **their local Shelter could be connected to the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter.** All participants favoured a closer relationship between the two.

The general plan was for a **partnership between the two**

Shelters. Because the two Shelters have evolved differently, they could each work together to improve the other. For example, while Hinton has no native outreach worker, Grande Cache does, and Hinton in turn has a child assessment worker, which Grande Cache does not. The two might consider **sharing resources, certainly sharing expertise.**

Another suggestion was that the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter could perhaps provide a kind of 'second-stage housing', for women requiring longer stays than those available at Grande Cache. Public education and outreach activities could also perhaps be shared.

3.8.6 Summary of Findings

Grande Cache is a younger community with a large transient population, and a sizable native community. The use of alcohol and drugs is perceived to be a significant underlying problem.

Existing services for women are good, with a local Shelter, trained volunteers, and good general support from the community and from funders.

The geographical isolation of Grande Cache and the lack of family support available makes service provision to victims of family violence sometimes difficult. Often there is little connection with other

service providers in the community.

The Grande Cache Shelter envisions a partnership with the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter, which would include a sharing of resources and expertise, and where possible, joint projects.

3.9 Common themes clearly emerged from the various focus groups, such as the need for extensive public awareness and educational programmes, and more information on the Yellowhead Shelter and its services. The need for additional counselling programmes and support groups was also frequently mentioned during the focus group discussions. While support for the regional model of service delivery is evident, each community emphasized the importance of programmes and initiatives that responded to their identified needs and concerns. Some of the possible alternatives that have been tried in other communities in Canada are reviewed in the section that follows.

4.0 The Search for Effective Rural Alternatives

4.1 Of the many challenges which have faced shelter workers and other advocates concerned with preventing wife battering, probably the most persistently insoluble is the question of effective rural alternatives. Despite widespread concern, every alternative attempted seems to encounter insurmountable problems or unanticipated consequences when it is put into practice.

4.2 Part of this is the uniqueness of rural lifestyles in general. However, it is very important to understand the special problems faced by rural women who are trapped in abusive relationships.[1] Some of the major considerations are as follows:

4.2.1 Isolation:

There is **geographic isolation**, given that many communities are a considerable distance from the nearest town, and often, women live a mile or more away from their nearest neighbour.

The isolation is made worse because **transportation links** are often very poor and a woman's access to the family

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[1] See Family Violence in Northern Alberta, (Northern Alberta Development Council, April 1988); also Linda MacLeod, **Battered But Not Beaten: Preventing Wife Battering in Canada**, (Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, June 1987); also *idem*, "Sincerely Seeking Solutions: Exploring Rural Alternatives for Battered Women in Canada", (Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, June 1988).

vehicle may well be controlled by her partner.

Geographical isolation enhances mistrust of outside agencies and individuals.

4.2.2   Poor Services:

There are **fewer services available** to residents of most rural areas, and those that do exist are only available on a limited or sporadic basis, and therefore may not be there when they are needed.

Fewer service providers in rural areas means **more burn-out** amoung those service providers there, and therefore less openness to new ideas and new demands.   Service providers are often also isolated, cut off from the support of other concerned people working in the field.

Policing rural areas is very difficult.   Small contingents service large geographical areas, making any kind of preventive policing and ready availability quite limited.

4.2.3 Underemployment:

Seasonal employment and the **high rate of unemployment** in many rural areas is likely to **aggravate existing family tensions** and can make it very difficult for a woman to leave a battering situation.   She may not be able to find a

time when her husband is not at home, and she may not be able to find a job to support herself and her children if she does leave.

Poverty, or the fear of poverty, can create a cycle of defeat. **Poverty limits battered women's choices and their ability to plan their future.** It can force them to accept the violence in their lives.

4.2.4 Community Attitudes:

The traditional values and way of life that emphasize the man as the head of the family and the primacy of the nuclear family **encourage social isolation** for many women, both because they have come to accept economic and social dependence on their partner, and because they fear ostracism from the community.

There is still a strong **preference for seeking help with problems from family members** rather than from social services. This can create problems for service providers who are attempting to educate communities about family violence and to provide services.

There is a **social stigma attached to people who seek help, especially financial help,** and those who do are seen as not able to take care of themselves. Consequently most victims of family violence do not want to go on welfare.

Since many women would not be able to support themselves without welfare, they may feel trapped between the physical and emotional pain of battering and the social stigma of leaving their husbands and going on welfare.

It is also tradition in rural areas to emphasize "couples", and as a result, a separated or divorced woman faces difficulty in being assimilated into positive social situations.

Finally, many rural communities are bound together through religious affiliation, and much community support comes from those affiliations. This source of support can pose real problems for congregation members who may fear the loss of this support from their religious community if the violence in their families is exposed.

4.2.5 Lack of Anonymity:

A desire to conceal the abusive relationship is pervasive when the community is small and everyone is well aware of everyone else's business.

A woman who is a victim of abuse may not have access to a telephone or be reluctant to use a party-line telephone because of the risk of being overheard by neighbours sharing the line as she seeks outside help.

In addition, **long distance calls can be traced** once the bill comes in and an unexplained call may spark further abuse.

Even if safe shelter can be found with a friend or a neighbour it is not difficult for a batterer in a **small community** to find his partner if he so wishes. As a result **other families can be put at risk.**

4.2.6 Native concerns:

For native women who are battered, the problems of isolation are made much worse by **linguistic and cultural differences.** Poverty is for many a persistent problem and knowledge of existing services is often nonexistent. Even if a native woman is aware of available help in an outside community she may feel reluctant to approach what she perceives as an **organization serving a predominantly white population.**

4.2.7 Lack of Accommodation Options:

Housing options in rural areas are **extremely limited and** often substandard.

Neighbours are frequently **unwilling to get involved** through fear of being seen to be taking sides.

4.3   All of these special problems point to the need for a special constellation of services which are responsive to the characteristics and problems of rural communities.   Nevertheless, while there is much that can be learned from a review of the approaches that have been attempted in other rural settings, it must be appreciated that there is **no ideal alternative.**   What works well in one rural community may turn out to unworkable or inappropriate in another. What seems to get positive results in a predominantly rural community may be a dismal failure in a small company town or in a predominantly native community.

4.4   What follows, then, is a review of the various rural alternatives that are presently in place, or have been considered, across the country.

4.4.1   Transportation

Most rural shelters that were contacted mentioned that **maintaining a transportion network was a very significant practical problem.**   Because most networks depend on volunteers, there is frequent turnover.   Moreover, most rural service providers are too understaffed to be able to send a staff member to collect a woman in crisis and bring her to a shelter or transition house.   Rural shelters across the country normally have an **arrangement with the** respective provincial Social Services to pay for transportation, including lengthy taxicab rides.   In other communities, houses have a transportation agreement

with the police who undertake either to transport the woman to the transition house or to keep her safe at the police station or at the local hospital until the house can send a worker or volunteer to collect her.

4.4.2 Toll Free Lines

Toll-free crisis lines have become **an important service for many rural shelters across the country**, although it is important to appreciate that they can only be as good as the support services that are available to answer the crisis line. If there is little immediate help available, raised expectations and hopes can be dashed, and women who are battered may be left as confused about their alternatives as before they found the courage to make the call to the crisis line.

4.4.3 Safe Houses

This is the most common option across the country for providing emergency protection for rural women. **Safe houses are private homes that offer shelter overnight or for a few days** while the abused woman considers what options she has for the immediate future. Despite their apparent practicality, safe houses have come under considerable criticism. Because they depend on volunteers, who are often poorly prepared for their new and often dangerous responsibilities, there is a high turnover rate of available houses. There is also the complaint that safe houses

in small communities are **often not safe for the women and children seeking shelter or for those providing it,** as it is very difficult to keep the location a secret. A further concern is that safe houses can perpetuate the idea that a safe place to stay is the only thing that victims of family violence need, and as a result governments can ignore the importance of providing the many other services necessary to support woman and their children who are battered.

4.4.4 Satellites

Satellite houses were developed as a way of overcoming some of the problems associated with safe houses. According to this plan, **small shelters are established to offer women protection for a few days before they can be transported to a larger transition house to which the** satellite is linked. While government financial support for satellite shelters in Alberta has recently been established, similar facilities in other provinces have been left to depend completely on community support. Transportation has continued to be a problem for many satellites and some have found that the close working relationship of several houses has not worked as well as had been hoped. Frequently there is pressure to provide more of the services on a local basis rather than to move women to the transition house.

4.4.5 Resource Centres

In Ontario, a number of isolated rural communities have established multi-purpose resource centres and residential facilities. The idea behind this model was that because there are far too few services available, a Resource Centre which can **provide a variety a services to a varied population** would be much more cost effective than shelters that would be seldom full. There were early concerns among women's advocates that these Centres would provide inappropriate services to women who are battered and their children. In practice, however, the Resource Centres have gradually changed to become rather similar to transition houses, and they are able to provide services in response to the dominant problem of wife assault in isolated communities.

4.4.6 Public Education

Despite the acknowledged importance of public education in the prevention of family violence, most regional shelters that were contacted did not have the luxury of time, staff or money to pursue an aggressive public education programme. In Alberta, a number of the regional shelters have patched together sufficient funding to allow them to **hire a part-time Public Education or Community Awareness Coordinator.** Manuals and training programmes have been prepared and would be available for other shelters contemplating a similar initiative.

4.4.7 Self-Help and Mutual Aid

A number of rural communities have established self-help and mutual aid programmes, and this process has been viewed as a **cost-effective option that helps reduce isolation** and encourages community networking. In Labrador and the Territories, informal support networks for women have been established using the telephone. Some women have 'telephone buddies' as far away as Iceland. In Yellowknife, there is a volunteer-run system of matching women in crisis by telephone with other women who have been through the same experience for peer support, even if they are hundreds of miles apart.

4.4.8 Integrating Native Women

Shelters in Labrador have successfully integrated native and white women. Half the staff hired in these shelters are native. This equality in staffing ensures that all women have access to the culture of their choice, and the houses try to include native wild food (e.g. caribou) on their menus. Still, this successful model is not shared across the country. Many workers in shelters feel that the degree of **integration in the house is usually a reflection of the degree of integration between natives and whites in the community** as a whole. In some northern communities, particularly those with a mainly aboriginal population, services exist which work

within the northern native culture. Because breaking up the family and the community is seen in many aboriginal cultures as very negative, these counselling programmes often seek to prevent the violence and to work within a framework which will preserve the community. One such service, in northwestern Ontario, serves about 12,000 people spread across 300,000 square kilometres, partly by telephone, partly through a network of counsellors.

4.4.9 Counselling and Follow-up Support Programmes.

For many rural houses, any counselling or follow-up programmes have to be **provided by volunteers,** because so many rural houses are operating on a 'shoe-string budget'. Rural houses in British Columbia have particularly successful volunteer programmes. Even in one very transient northern B.C. town, the safe house network has been able to keep quite a stable corps of volunteers over a period of four years. Guelph, in Ontario has a safe environment programme where **workers do outreach to neighbouring communities** and where women and children stay in hospitals and other public places to be kept safe until they can be transported to a transition house or given other relevant support. Some **rural shelters in Alberta have a volunteer programme in place,** particularly for supporting public education initiatives, or for meeting transportation needs.

Because of lack of other services, **safe houses must often manage counselling programmes in rural areas.** One safe house network in Nova Scotia runs a treatment programme for men who batter. The facilitation team is made up of two women affiliated with the safe house network and two child care workers. A few other houses run men's groups with **co-facilitation by another professional or professionals in the community.** The safe house in Nova Scotia runs a support group once a week in a nearby town.

4.4.10   Competitiveness Among Shelters

Competitiveness among shelters in nearby centres offering similar services **seldom appears to be a problem in rural areas because resources are so minimal and the needs** so great that they do not have the luxury of competition. However in Prince Edward Island, the house in Charlottetown is experiencing competitiveness with two other communities which would also like transition houses. They are trying to negotiate a model whereby these two other communities would set up a second-stage housing with one room allocated for a one- to three-day crisis shelter, while the Charlottetown house would remain the only transition house. In Newfoundland, competitiveness is not an issue, because there is always a need for more houses. The Labrador house mentioned that they ensure that potentially 'rival' groups are included on their board.

4.4.11   Second-Stage and Long-Term Housing

One of the **major problems of women in rural areas is their lack of choices when it comes to planning for the future.**   Many of the women have never lived outside their community and have no desire to leave it and their friends and family.   However, if they want to leave their husbands, there are often no housing or job options for them.   In Thompson, Manitoba, one house combines an emergency shelter with a second-stage house.   Women can stay up to ten days at the emergency shelter and up to six months in the second-stage house.   The Thompson house also has a job re-entry programme and workers are planning to include, as part of the second-stage house, a profitable enterprise that would enable women to gain skills and job experience.   In Kenora, Ontario, a new forty-unit long-term housing project is beginning, and 21 of the units will be reserved for women who are battered. Most rural houses have so little money that they do not have the time to investigate innovative services.   They are simply trying to solidify what they already have.   Still, new ideas are often considered.   For example, some women are suggesting that instead of traditional second-stage housing, offering co-operative living arrangements, perhaps rural women escaping violent homes could be helped to set up co-operative farms.

5.0 Facing the Future: The Next Five Years.

"Family violence is a complicated and multidimensional problem. It involves attitudes of the victim and the perpetrator as well as society. It is influenced by experiences in childhood and by observed and learned behaviour. It is a highly charged and emotional dilemma, scarring an individual for life. Because of all of these factors **family violence requires a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach.**" [2]

5.1   Solutions to the unique problems of rural women faced with family violence **are** certainly available. They require creativity and flexibility in their design and implementation, however. When considering the approaches that are available, it is customary to cluster them into three major categories:

5.1.1   **Prevention:** for example, public education and awareness, professional education, self-assertiveness training and communication, and life-skills courses.

5.1.2   **Crisis Intervention:** for example, police and legal protection, emergency medical services, emergency shelter, emergency transportation, emergency childcare, crisis counselling, crisis line assistance, and volunteer advocacy.

[2] Family Violence in Northern Alberta: Addressing the Issues. Northern Alberta Development Council. April 1988.

5.1.3   **Follow-Up Services:** for example, co-ordination and co-operation of agency and services, long-term housing, self-help support groups, individual and group counselling, and continuing public awareness.

5.2 It is important to appreciate, that no one shelter in a community could be expected to bear the full burden of providing all of these services.   A shelter's limited resources must of course be focused on its **primary responsibility to provide crisis intervention to women and their children who are victims of family violence.**   There is, however, a growing expectation that a shelter should be **capable of providing leadership to others in the community in the area of family violence.**   This includes: showing leadership in initiating public education programmes, in establishing inter-agency committees and working with other service providers to see that follow-up support and counselling are available for women who are struggling to take their rightful place in the community.

5.3 The **Yellowhead Emergency Shelter** for Women Society is certainly **capable of giving this leadership** to the communities of the Yellowhead region.   Despite setbacks, the Shelter has accomplished much in its very short history.   There is abundant evidence that with the right leadership from both the staff and the Board, the Shelter could certainly **rekindle the broad community support** that saw the establishment of the Shelter in the first place. If the Shelter is prepared to work closely with the appropriate

leadership in each of the major communities, and is committed to meeting **local needs with local solutions,** then it should certainly be capable of fulfilling its regional mandate.

5.4 The Shelter must **build on its past successes and it present strengths by planning well for the future.** It can not afford to struggle from crisis to crisis, wasting its precious supply of community goodwill. If it is to bring alive its mission statement, the Shelter **needs to build a 'shared vision' of what it wishes to contribute** to the Yellowhead region in the next five years. Good planning requires this clarity of purpose in step-by-step detail, so that those individuals and groups in the community, whose support for the work of the Shelter is so critical, can be kept properly informed. But where should the Shelter first turn its attention as it starts its second five years?

5.5 Public Education

5.5.1 Public education programming on family violence in the Yellowhead region needs the leadership of the Shelter. Without doubt, an **aggressive community campaign will increase the awareness of the Shelter and its services.** In turn, this will likely lead to greater demand for both its residential and non-residential services. The Shelter is already receiving FCSS funding in three communities to help it to conduct public education programming, yet it would appear that little of the funding has been used to date in this way. **It is therefore recommended that the Shelter use its available FCSS**

funding, along with any further resources it can obtain from the same sources, to hire a part-time Community Awareness Coordinator.

5.5.2 The Community Awareness Coordinator's responsibilities would include the **development of public education programming**, beginning with the excellent resources that have already been developed in Hinton by The Society for the Prevention of Family Violence. In addition to public education campaigns, such as newspaper articles and mall displays, the Coordinator would be expected to approach organizations such as schools, service clubs, professional associations and women's organizations, and **offer to provide an appropriate presentation on family violence and the work of the Shelter.**

5.5.3 In order to assist the Community Awareness Coordinator with some of the more straight forward presentations, a **Speakers' Bureau of volunteers should be established.** Training sessions should be required for participants in this Speakers' Bureau. As well, the Coordinator should accompany new speakers to their first few speaking assignments. Members of the staff and the Board should also be encouraged to participate. Of course, these public education activities must be made available throughout the Yellowhead Region. Training Manuals for volunteer speakers are presently available from at least two regional shelters in Alberta.

5.5.4 The Shelter should also be encouraged to provide regular information sessions at least four days a week that are advertised and open for both residents and non-residents. One Alberta regional shelter offers two sessions a week on battering and two on building better parenting skills. The value of such information sessions is that they would at least allow women in or near Hinton to visit the Shelter, thereby helping to dispel the perception that it is not a pleasant place to stay.

5.5.5 Recommendations

That the Shelter hire a part-time Community Awareness Coordinator to give leadership to an extensive public awareness programme operating in the communites of the Yellowhead region.

That the position of Community Awareness Coordinator be funded by Community Service Grants provided by the participating FCSS programmes.

That the Shelter develop a Speakers' Bureau with a Training Programme for volunteer speakers.

That the Shelter provide a regular series of Information Sessions for residents and non-residents at the Shelter, tailored to meet the needs and interests of women in the community.

5.6 Family Violence Resource Centres

5.6.1 Participants in the various focus group discussions voiced a strong desire to establish in each community a **Family Violence Resource Centre that could be a 'touch point' for women who needed advice or support from the Shelter.** It was strongly recommended that such a Centre be located in a safe and comparatively neutral setting. The Family and Friendship Room at Mountainview School in Hinton and the Family Centre in Edson were thought to be ideal locations. If other family or child-related activities were in progress in the same location, it would be comparatively easy for a woman to seek information without drawing attention to herself.

5.6.2 The Centre could provide an up-to-date selection of books, brochures and materials on issues relating to family violence. It should also make available **information on other services in the community that may be able to** assist a women who is at present or potentially a victim of family violence. A direct telephone line to the Shelter would also be appropriate. If possible, volunteers could be scheduled to assist in the Resource Centre during those periods when it is likely to be more active.

5.6.3 Ideally it should be possible for the Shelter to have a **staff person visit each Resource Centre on a regularly scheduled basis,** perhaps half a day a week, in the hope that

women who need help would make a point of returning during the scheduled time. It may also be possible to establish small self-help support groups of women in each community who are interested in getting support in this way.

5.6.4 Recommendations

That the Shelter work towards the establishment of a Family Violence Resource Centre in each of the major communities in the Yellowhead region.

That the Family Violence Resource Centres make use of available free space in appropriate locations, and train volunteers to staff the Resource Centres during peak periods of activity.

That a staff member from the Shelter should visit each of the Resource Centres on a regular basis to provide support to women or assist in establishing self-help support groups in each of the communities.

5.7 Re-establishment of Volunteer Training Programme.

5.7.1 Many of those involved in the focus groups expressed some regret that the Shelter had not been able to continue with the volunteer programme that had been set-up when it first opened. While the proper training and supervision of volunteers can require a considerable investment of staff time,

it should be appreciated that the contribution of volunteers goes far beyond the practical support that they offer to the running of the Shelter and its services. Active and enthusiastic volunteers will speak about the Shelter to their friends and neighbours, so that knowledge of its services gradually becomes more widespread. As a more positive and welcoming image of the Shelter emerges, donations will increase, and new programme initiatives will be more readily accepted.

5.7.2 Given the present funding limitations, it is unlikely that the Shelter will be in a position to hire a Volunteer Coordinator for sometime. While an unpaid Volunteer Coordinator may be a possibility, in the immediate future it is apparent that there may soon be resources available in Hinton to assist the Shelter staff with the screening, training and support of volunteers. There are also excellent volunter training manuals that have been prepared by other Shelters in Alberta that could provide additional ideas and materials to supplement the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter's existing volunteer training programme.

5.7.3 Many of those interviewed in the focus groups felt that volunteers could assist the operation of the Shelter on either a regularly scheduled basis or by being 'on call'. Help with childcare was frequently mentioned as a possibility, as was the ability to provide transportation and support for women visiting a doctor or a lawyer. In establishing a

volunteer programme, it would be important to start relatively small so that the initiative can be properly monitored. Moreover, it can be quite damaging if volunteers are trained and ready to contribute only to discover that there are few opportunities where they can assist. Volunteers who are very familar with the Shelter and the needs of its clients may also in time become **valued contributors to the Speakers' Bureau.**

5.7.4 Recommendations

That the Shelter re-establish its volunteer programme in order to increase the services offered by the Shelter and to enhance its reputation, especially within Hinton.

That the Shelter approach the Hinton FCSS funding programme for assistance and support with the screening, training and monitoring of its volunteers.

That the Shelter draw on the resources of other Alberta Shelters in supplementing its existing volunteer training programme.

5.8 Strengthening the 'Friends of YES'.

5.8.1 Linked with the re-establishment of its volunteer programme, the Shelter should also make every effort to

strengthen the chapters of 'Friends of YES' in the various communities. Since the chapters are comprised of persons who are knowledgeable about the Shelter and the problems faced by women who have been battered, **'Friends of Yes' can be a critical link in establishing the informal support networks that are so valuable in rural and small communities.** Local community pressure can be an effective way of changing the behaviour of men who batter, if it is apparent to them that those they like and respect strongly disapprove of their actions. Informal networks can also often reach out to the extended family members or friendship groups of women who are being battered, to see that help and support is available. In addition, **knowing the power brokers, the businessmen, the church leaders in the community, and gaining their support, is fundamental if creative alternatives to fighting family violence are to succeed.**

5.8.2 An active Chapter of 'Friends of YES' can also assist the Shelter in **improving its presence in each community.** Members of the 'Friends of YES' could be available as speakers to assist the Community Awareness Coordinator, uncover new public education opportunities, and help to run the Family Violence Resource Centre, all valuable contributions to the work of the Shelter. Training as volunteers would be important, especially for training them to **provide immediate comfort to a battered woman and transportation to the Shelter in Hinton,** if this was necessary.

5.8.3 Recommendations

That the Shelter work to strengthen all Chapters of 'Friends of YES', thereby improving the profile and the effectiveness of the Shelter in each community.

That the 'Friends of YES' be integrated into the volunteer programme of the Shelter; as speakers, support providers, and Resource Centre volunteers, to assist the Shelter in its services and programmes.

5.9 Inter-Agency Services Committee on Family Violence

5.9.1 A frequently heard complaint during the focus group discussions was the **inability of the Shelter to maintain a consistent and positive relationship with other professionals and service providers concerned with family violence.** A contributing factor to this in the Yellowhead region appears to be the rapid turn-over of staff in both provincial government departments and community agencies. As a result, liaison is irregular and knowledge of new services is incomplete.

5.9.2 The Shelter should therefore take the initiative in each of the communities of establishing an **Inter-Agency Services Committee on Family Violence.** While inter-agency groups already exist in most communities, it appears that meetings are infrequent and the agendas quite broad. Successful attempts at

co-ordinating community services invariably have a well-defined target population or issue. The Shelter should initially clarify the purpose of the Inter-Agency Services Committee, the expected commitment of its participants, and then identify an appropriate membership for each community. Those so identified should be approached and encouraged to participate. The Shelter's **Executive Director should be a full and active participant in each committee.**

5.9.3   In addition to providing a regular opportunity for information sharing and networking, the Inter-Agency Services Committee could also agree to work together in **establishing protocols or guidelines for referrals** as well as on-going liaison between the member groups and the Shelter.   A further positive outcome could be the development of co-leadership opportunities with respect to follow-up counselling or support groups between Shelter staff and other professionals in the community.

5.9.4   Recommendations

That the Shelter take the leadership required in each community to establish an Inter-Agency Services Committee on Family Violence.

That the Shelter prepare the terms of reference for the committees, including the intended purpose, the membership, the expected commitment and the

desired outcomes.

That the Shelter work with the Inter-Agency Services Committees in each area to establish protocols or guidelines for referrals, and to facilitate on-going liaison between the member groups and the Shelter.

That the Shelter encourage the development of co-leadership opportunities for counselling or support groups with other professionals in the various communities.

5.10 Project Community Resources

5.10.1 It is well appreciated that these major new initiatives outlined above, such as the establishment of the Family Violence Resource Centres, the development of a volunteer programme, the strengthening of the chapters of 'Friends of YES', and the formation of the Inter-Agency Services Committees on Family Violence are collectively much more than the Shelter could adequately handle, given its presented staffing.

5.10.2 It is therefore proposed that the Shelter submit an application to The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence for a demonstration project to be called **Project Community Resources**. Funding is presently available up to a maximum of $18,000. The Office has indicated that they would look

favourably upon projects that are intended to coordinate community responses to the problems of family violence. Project Community Resources would be **of particular benefit as a demonstration project to other regional shelters in the country who have also struggled with the difficulty of providing equitable and accessible services across a wide geographic area.**

5.10.3 It is proposed that if the Shelter was successful with its application, it could **hire a Community Resources Co- ordinator** on a year long short-term contract. The responsibilities of the position would emphasize the importance of establishing viable networks in each community and working towards the development of the various initiatives outline above. If the maximum funding was made available, it is anticipated that the Shelter could meet the costs of transportation and materials as well as employ the Community Resources Coordinator for at least four days a week.

5.10.4 An important aspect of Project Community Resources should be to explore in detail the possible roles and responsibilities of a fulltime **Community Outreach Worker** for the Shelter. This position would allow the Shelter to maintain ongoing liasion with the various communities following the completion of the Project. However an important additional emphasis in the position **should be the provision of regular counselling services, on a weekly basis,** in each of the communities. It should also be anticipated that

following the completion of the Project Community Resource, the **Executive Director** will be in a better position to continue the relationship with the Interagency Committees on Family Violence.

5.10.5 Recommendations

That the Shelter submit an application for funding to the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence for its 'Project Community Resources'.

That this funding be used to provide the Shelter with a Community Resources Co-ordinator, whose responsibilities would be to enhance the ability of the Shelter to provide equitable and accessible services to all communities in the Yellowhead Region.

That the Shelter explore the possibilities of establishing the position of a Community Outreach Worker following the completion of the Project, with responsibilities for maintaining the on-going liaison between the Shelters and the communities and establishing regular counselling.

5.11   Maintaining Existing Shelter Services

5.11.1   As important as the new regional initiatives will be for the development of the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter, the

central focus of its work will undoubtedly continue to be **the provision of shelter and support to women and their children** who have fled from violence in their homes. The increasing use of the Shelter will, however, be **dependent on the extent to which the general public holds a positive and knowledgeable image of the services** which it offers. The focus group discussions suggested that the **perception of the Shelter's services in the past was at best uncertain and at worst critical.** In particular, a special focus group meeting held with women who had stayed at the Shelter revealed a number of significant concerns.

5.11.2   Some of the women involved in the discussion indicated that before coming to the Shelter they **did not have a very positive image of what they would find** but that they felt so desperate and in danger they were prepared to accept whatever was offered. As one woman commented, " I felt that this was as far down as I could go to come here." Once in the Shelter, the women were **impressed with how physically secure they and their children had felt,** and how helpful the staff had been in providing clothes, toiletries and assisting with the necessary arrangements to visit lawyers, social services or get children into a local school.

5.11.3   **One of the concerns** about the operation of the Shelter expressed by the women in the focus group was its **regimentation and lack of flexibility.** There was a **complaint about the intake form** being too long with too

many inappropriate personal questions, too soon after the woman had arrived at the Shelter, and had not yet had an opportunity to get to know the staff person asking the questions. Although the Shelter's policy respects a woman's need for time to become comfortable with the new environment, there was a concern raised about women **having to talk about the abuse** when in fact they felt drained and confused. On the other hand, one woman added that she was anxious to have a friendly, supportive conversation with one of the Shelter staff but discovered that a **'professional veneer'** did not allow the worker to exchange experiences. As well the comparative youthfulness of the staff and an **emphasis on training rather than life experience** was identified as a limitation by some of the women.

5.11.4 **Problems of inflexibility** were also mentioned with respect to **kitchen duties**: "I was happy to help out but the first day I came here I couldn't think about food but they insisted that I do my part", **child discipline**: "They wanted me to use 'time out' to discipline (my daughter) but this doesn't work with all kids. My daughter just cried and cried and they told me that I just had to leave her crying for a full hour. Just listening to her crying increased my stress", and **child care**: "I really needed someone to watch my kids while I went to the lawyers more than they needed an assessment." Further suggestions for change included the possibilities of providing some **professional indepth counselling**, assisting women find **long term housing**, offering more **information on**

welfare rights and encouraging **more volunteers from the community** to assist with babysitting, listening and support.

5.11.5   The question of flexibility in Shelter services has much to do with the **leadership provided by the Executive Director** in establishing a supportive and responsive environment to the other staff.   As well **being able to maintain reasonable stability among the staff will** also ensure a more consistent level of service that is dedicated to giving priority to meeting the needs of those it serves over the Shelter's administrative requirements.   The comments quoted above also suggest that the Shelter would be wise in hiring future staff for the Shelter to **give consideration to applicants** who may lack some of the formal training requirements but **whose life experience would equip them very well to offer the support and care** to women and children in need.   In particular it would be of value if the Shelter was able to **hire a native staff member.**

5.11.6   **Staff development opportunities for all staff members should be encouraged.**   Such opportunities can be very important in enhancing a staff member's commitment to the Shelter as well as a valuable source of new ideas for the future development of the Shelter and its sevices.   Included among the staff development options should be the **continuation of the meetings with concerned professionals** in the community who are interested in visiting the Shelter and learning more about its services and its

concerns.

5.11.7   As the Shelter works to reaffirm its **community support** and its dedication to meeting the needs of women and their children who have been abused, it will be **important for all of the staff working at the Shelter to be kept fully informed,** and where possible to be actively involved in any new developments.   Their enthusiasm and support will be invaluable in the months ahead.

5.11.8   **Recommendations**

That the **Board of Directors support the work of the Executive Director in developing a supportive and enthusiastic staff team who are well informed and committed to the proposed changes.**

That the **Executive Director and the staff continue to develop procedures and approaches that will soften the perception of regimentation in the present operation of the Shelter.**

That in any **future hiring of Shelter staff, an emphasis be given to 'life experience' rather than to training.**

5.12   Provincial Initiatives

5.12.1   The **basic essential services funding model** used by the provincial government clearly **does not accommodate the needs of regional shelters** that are expected to provide additional public eduation, outreach and support services to a number of communities spread over a wide geographic area.   It is therefore important that the Board of the Shelter **initiate a campaign to lobby for the necessary changes to the funding model.**   Project Community Resource will offer an excellent opportunity to gather reliable data and information on what additional funding would be necessary, if the Yellowhead Shelter is to provide equitable and accessible services throughout the region in the decade ahead.   The Board has already identified its request that support for board activities should be allowed within the funding model, along with the additional costs associated with transportation, outreach activities and support programmes.   The lobbying campaign should also **include discussions with other regional shelters in the province,** followed by a collaborative approach to the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters.

5.12.2   It is important that the Board and staff of the Shelter establish contacts with other similar shelters in the province, in order to encourage the exchange of **information and ideas and establish opportunities for staff to have extended visits to other shelters.**   A

special significance in this respect is building upon the obvious goodwill that exists in Grande Cache towards the Yellowhead Shelter. The **opportunities are available to share resources and ideas with the Grande Cache Shelter** such as in public awareness and educational programmmes and staff development workshops. These possible initiatives should be high on the agenda of the Executive Director and the new Community Resources Coordinator in the months ahead.

5.12.3   Recommendations

That the Board of the Shelter initiate a lobbying campaign, in collaboration with other regional shelters, to change the basic essential services funding model to allow for the inclusion of additional regional costs and services.

That the Shelter establish regular contact with other regional shelters in order to exchange information and opportunities for on-site visits by the staff of other Shelters.

That a particular effort be made to build upon the goodwill that is evident between the Grande Cache and Yellowhead Shelters through the sharing of resources and staff development opportunities.

5.13   Strengthening the Board of Directors

**5.13.1   Leadership for any new initiatives must
come from the top.**   Consequently the **Board of Directors**
needs to be fully **involved in establishing the broad
direction for any new services** and giving the appropriate
support to the Executive Director to enable her to implement
the changes and initiatives.   It is therefore critical that the
Board and the staff have a **clear understanding as to their
respective roles and responsibilities.**

5.13.2   Given the complexity of some of the proposals, it is
also important that the Board of Directors and the staff
undertake an **annual planning workshop,** where progress
can be measured and active plans for the year ahead be
established.

5.13.3   The amount of work involved and the importance
of the community approach to regional services makes it
essential that **representation on the Board from all
communities and regions be maintained.**

5.13.4   Recommendations

That the Board and staff clarify their respective roles
and responsibilities in the initiation of new projects or
programs.

That the Board and staff undertake an annual planning workshop.

That the Board maintain representation from all communities and regions served by the Shelter.

6.0. Summary of Recommendations

6.1 Public Education

That the Shelter hire a part-time Community Awareness Coordinator to give leadership to an extensive public awareness programme operating in the communites of the Yellowhead region.

That the position of Community Awareness Coordinator be funded by Community Service Grants provided by the participating FCSS programmes.

That the Shelter develop a Speakers' Bureau with a Training Programme for volunteer speakers.

That the Shelter provide a regular series of Information Sessions for residents and non-residents at the Shelter, tailored to meet the needs and interests of women in the community.

6.2 Family Violence Resource Centres

That the Shelter work towards the establishment of a Family Violence Resource Centre in each of the major communities in the Yellowhead region.

That the Family Violence Resource Centres make use of available free space in appropriate locations, a n d make use of the support of trained volunteers to staff these Centres, so as to minimize the costs involved.

That a staff member from the Shelter should, if possible, visit each of the Resource Centres on a regular basis to provide support to women or assist in establishing self-help support groups.

6.3 Re-establishment of Volunteer Training Programme

That the Shelter re-establish its volunteer programme in order to increase the services offered by the Shelter and to enhance its reputation, especially within Hinton.

That the Shelter approach the Hinton FCSS funding programme for assistance and support with the screening, training and monitoring of its volunteers.

That the Shelter draw on the resources of other Alberta Shelters in supplementing its existing volunteer training programme.

6.4 Strengthening the 'Friends of YES'

That the Shelter work to strengthen all Chapters of 'Friends of YES', thereby improving the profile and the effective of the Shelter in each community.

That the 'Friends of YES' be integrated into the volunteer programme of the Shelter, as Speakers, Support providers, and Resource Centre workers, to assist the Shelter in its services and programmes.

6.5 Inter-Agency Services Committee on Family Violence

That the Shelter take the leadership required to establish in each community an Inter-Agency Services Committee on Family Violence.

That the Shelter prepare the terms of reference for the Committees, including the intended purpose, the membership, the expected commitment and the desired outcomes.

That the Shelter work with the Inter-Agency Services Committees in each area to establish protocols or guidelines for referrals, and to facilitate on-going liaison between the member groups and the Shelter.

That the Shelter submit an application for funding to the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence for its 'Project Community Resources'.

That this funding be used to provide the Shelter with a Community Resources Coordinator, whose responsibilities would be to enhance the ability of the Shelter to provide equitable and accessible services to all communities in the Yellowhead Region.

That the Shelter explore the possibilities o f establishing the position of a Community Outreach Worker following the completion of the Project, with responsibilities for maintaining the ongoing liaison between the Shelters and the communities a n d establishing regular counselling.

6.7 Maintaining Existing Shelter Services

That the Board of Directors support the work of the Executive Director in developing a supportive and enthusiastic staff team who are well informed and committed to the proposed changes.

That the Executive Director and the staff continue to develop procedures and approaches that will soften the perception of regimentation in the present

operation of the Shelter.

That in any future hiring of Shelter staff, an emphasis be given to 'life experience' rather than to training.

6.8 Provincial Initiatives

That the Board of the Shelter initiate a lobbying campaign, in collaboration with other regional shelters, to change the basic essential services funding model to allow for the inclusion of additional regional costs and services.

That the Shelter establish regular contact with other regional shelters in order to exchange information and opportunities for on-site visits by the staff of other shelters.

That a particular effort be made to build upon the goodwill that is evident between the Grande Cache and Yellowhead Shelters through the sharing of resources and staff development opportunities.

6.9 Strenthening the Board of Directors

That the Board and staff clarify their respective roles and responsibilities in the initiation of new projects or programmes.

That the Board and staff undertake an annual planning workshop.

That the Board maintain representation from all communities and regions served by the Shelter.

APPENDIX I

PROPOSED TWO-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN
DECEMBER 1989 TO DECEMBER 1991

RECOMMENDATIONS (from *Local Needs: Local Solutions*)	TIME-LINE OF DEVELOPMENT	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
	Dec. '89 — Mar. '90 — Jun. '90 — Sep. '90 — Dec. '90 — Mar. '91 — Jun. '91 — Sep. '91 — Dec. '91	
6.1 Public Education		
Hiring of a part-time Community Awareness Co-ordinator	/----/develop terms of reference; /----/hiring process; /----> first contract; /----> renew contract	Personnel Committee/ Executive Director
Application for FCSS Community Service Grant . .	/----/ re-apply	Exec. Dir.
Development of Speakers' Bureau of volunteers	/----/ training for volunteers; /----/ promotion of Speakers' Bureau; /----> begin presentations	Community Awareness Co-ordinator/ Volunteers
Development and Presentation of regular series of Information Sessions for women	/----> begin sessions	C.A.C./ Shelter staff/ Volunteers

PROPOSED TWO-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (cont'd.)

RECOMMENDATIONS (from *Local Needs: Local Solutions*)	Dec. '89	Mar. '90	Jun. '90	Sep. '90	Dec. '90	Mar. '91	Jun. '91	Sep. '91	Dec. '91	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
6.2 Family Violence Resource Centres										
Establishment of F.V.R.C.s in major communities				—/ begin planning	—/ opening of first centres					Community Resources Co-ordinator
Training of volunteers to staff the F.V.R.C.s				—/ begin training of Volunteers						C.R.C./C.A.C.
Establishment of staff outreach on regular basis to F.V.R.C.s				—————> begin with openings						C.R.C./ Exec. Dir.
6.3 Re-establishment of Volunteer Training										
Re-establishment of Volunteer Training programme		—/ review volunteer training	—/ recruitment of volunteers	—/ begin volunteer training						Personnel Committee/ C.A.C.
Application for FCSS assistance with training		—/ apply								C.A.C./ Exec. Dir.
Supplementation of information on volunteer training from other shelters . .		—/ obtain materials								C.A.C.

TIME-LINE OF DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSED TWO-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (cont'd.)

| RECOMMENDATIONS (from *Local Needs: Local Solutions*)	TIME-LINE OF DEVELOPMENT									PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
	Dec. '89	Mar. '90	Jun. '90	Sep. '90	Dec. '90	Mar. '91	Jun. '91	Sep. '91	Dec. '91	
6.4 Strengthening the Friends of YES										
Increased membership in the Friends of YES		|-------/ contact current members |-------/ membership drive							C.R.C./ Friends of YES
Increased profile of Friends of YES			|-------/ awareness campaign							C.R.C./ Friends of YES
Integration of Friends of YES and other volunteers . .				|-------> invite to volunteer training						C.R.C./C.A.C.
6.5 Inter-Agency Services Committee on Family Violence										
Preparation of Terms of Reference, Purpose, Member-ship, Commitment, Outcomes for Committees		|-------/ develop				|-------/ evaluate			C.R.C./ Exec. Dir.
Formation of Inter-Agency Committees			|-------/ contact potential members |-------/ first meeting						C.R.C./ Exec. Dir.
Establishment of Protocols for Referrals and on-going Liaison between Agencies . .				|-------> establish						C.R.C./ Exec. Dir.

PROPOSED TWO-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (cont'd.)

RECOMMENDATIONS (from *Local Needs: Local Solutions*)	TIME-LINE OF DEVELOPMENT									PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
	Dec. '89	Mar. '90	Jun. '90	Sep. '90	Dec. '90	Mar. '91	Jun. '91	Sep. '91	Dec. '91	
6.6 Project Community Resources										
Application for Project . . .	*|-| application submitted*									Exec.Dir./ Board member
Hiring of Community Resources Co-ordinator		*|---| terms of reference* *|----| hiring process* *|-----> first contract*				*|----| evaluate project* *<---| end of contract*				Exec.Dir./ Board member
Hiring of Community Outreach Worker				*develop terms of reference |---|* *begin contract |----->*						Exec. Dir./ Board member
6.7 Maintaining Existing Shelter Service										
Staff Development around Programme changes		*|------> on-going*								Exec. Dir./
Increasing flexibility in Service delivery at Shelter . .		*./--------> on-going*								Staff Exec. Dir./
Development of Guidelines for Future Hiring		*|--------> on-going*								Staff Board/ Personnel Committee

PROPOSED TWO-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (cont'd.)

RECOMMENDATIONS (from *Local Needs: Local Solutions*)	TIME-LINE OF DEVELOPMENT									PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
	Dec. '89	Mar. '90	Jun. '90	Sep. '90	Dec. '90	Mar. '91	Jun. '91	Sep. '91	Dec. '91	
6.8 Provincial Initiatives										
Lobbying Campaign to change Basic Essential Services Funding Model				/------> begin lobbying with other shelters						President/ Board of Directors
Establishment of Regular Contact with other Shelters . .	/-------> on-going									President/ Exec. Dir.
Information Sharing with Grande Cache Shelter	/-------> on-going									C.R.C./ Exec. Dir.
6.9 Strengthening the Board of Directors										
Clarification of Roles by Board and Staff	/------/ gather materials									Ad-Hoc Board Committee
Development of Annual Planning Workshop		/------/ first meeting				/------/ second meeting				Exec. Dir./ Board
Increasing Representation by Various Communities on Board of Directors	/------> on-going process									President/ Board Committee
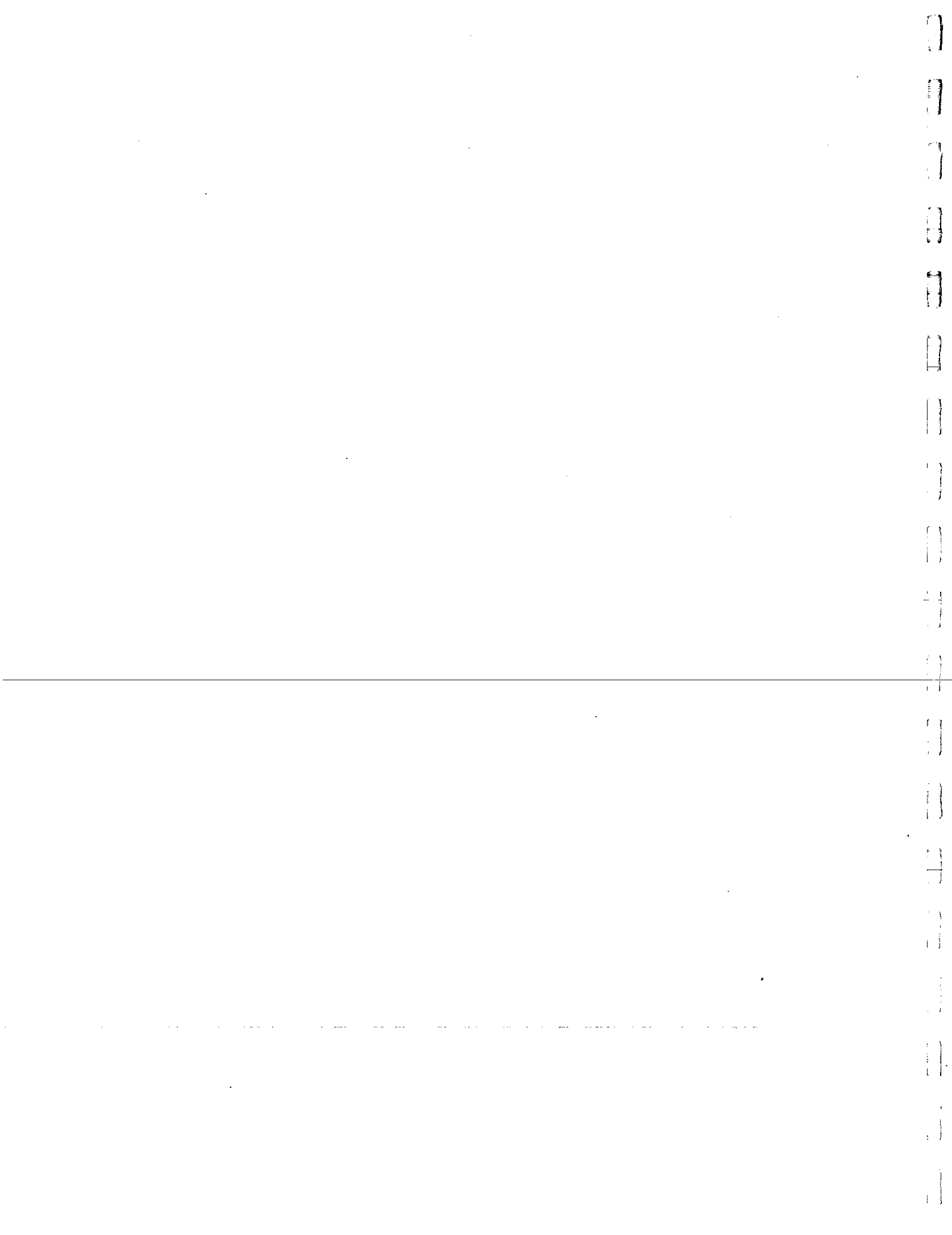
APPENDIX II

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

WILDWOOD

Ms. Carol Robertson Baker
AADAC

Cpl. Bob Bilodeau
Evansburg RCMP

Ms. Debbie Charest
FCSS Wildwood

Ms. Kathy Korsa
Wolf Creek/Pembina Transportation
Society

Ms. Brenda Stemmen
District Home Economist
Alberta Agriculture

Ms. Brenda Worthing
FCSS Wildwood

EDSON

Ms. Marg Adair
Staff member
Edson MLA Office

Dr. Deidre Duffy
Board President
YES

Ms. Myrna Meyer Field
Friends of YES

Ms. Terri Fondrick
Alberta Family and Social
Services

Rev. Doug Heine
Edson Ministerial Association

Mr. Marshall Hoke
AADAC

Ms. Carol McArthur
FCSS Edson

Ms. Rose Marie McCarthy
Executive Director
YES

Ms. Rhonda Reid
Alberta Agriculture

Cst. Wayne Snyder
Edson RCMP

Ms. Lindsay Stark
Alberta West Central Health Unit

Ms. Barb Studer
Board Member
YES

Cst. Rick Taylor
Edson RCMP

Mr. Carl Ulrich
FCSS Edson

HINTON

Pastor Owen Bayne
Hinton Ministerial Association

Cst. Carol Hashimoto
Hinton RCMP

Mr. John Higgerty
Attorney General's Office

Ms. Jo Holba
Catholic Women's League

Mr. Bob Lyons
Alberta Mental Health Services

Ms. Fiona Murray-Galbraith
Alberta West Central Health Unit

Ms. Kathy Rees
Family Services Co-ordinator
Community Services

Ms. Lori Robertson
Board Member
Community Services

Ms. Debbyann Solway
Alberta Family and Social Services

JASPER

Rev. David Griffin
Jasper Ministerial Association

Ms. Anne Hatfield
FCSS Jasper

Ms. Anna Keyes
Director
Jasper Day Care Centre

Mr. David Keyes
Psychologist

Ms. Cathy Kowalski
Employee Assistance Programme
Canadian Parks Service

Ms. Noreen Ough
Jasper RCMP

Ms. Catherine Ozard
Acting Director
FCSS Jasper

Ms. Margaret Watt
Pastoral Care

Ms. Terry Wetherton
Jasper National Park Health Unit

GRANDE CACHE

Ms. Evelyn Glover
Susa Creek

Ms. Betty Hodnefield
Alberta Mental Health Services

Ms. Laverne Hoffman
Life-Skills Coach Trainee
Transition House

Ms. Elaine Jones
Transition House

Rev. Lynn Maki
United Church Minister
Chairperson of the Board
Transition House

Ms. Doris McDonald
Transition House

Ms. Irene McDonald
Native Case Aide Worker
Susa Creek

Sgt. Eric Parr-Pearson
NCO Grande Cache RCMP

Ms. Margaret Slany
Transition House

Ms. Kathi Stapleton
Community Health Nurse
Alberta West Central Health Unit

Rev. Ron Talbert
Grande Cache Ministerial Association

Ms. Lorene Thursby
FCSS Grande Cache
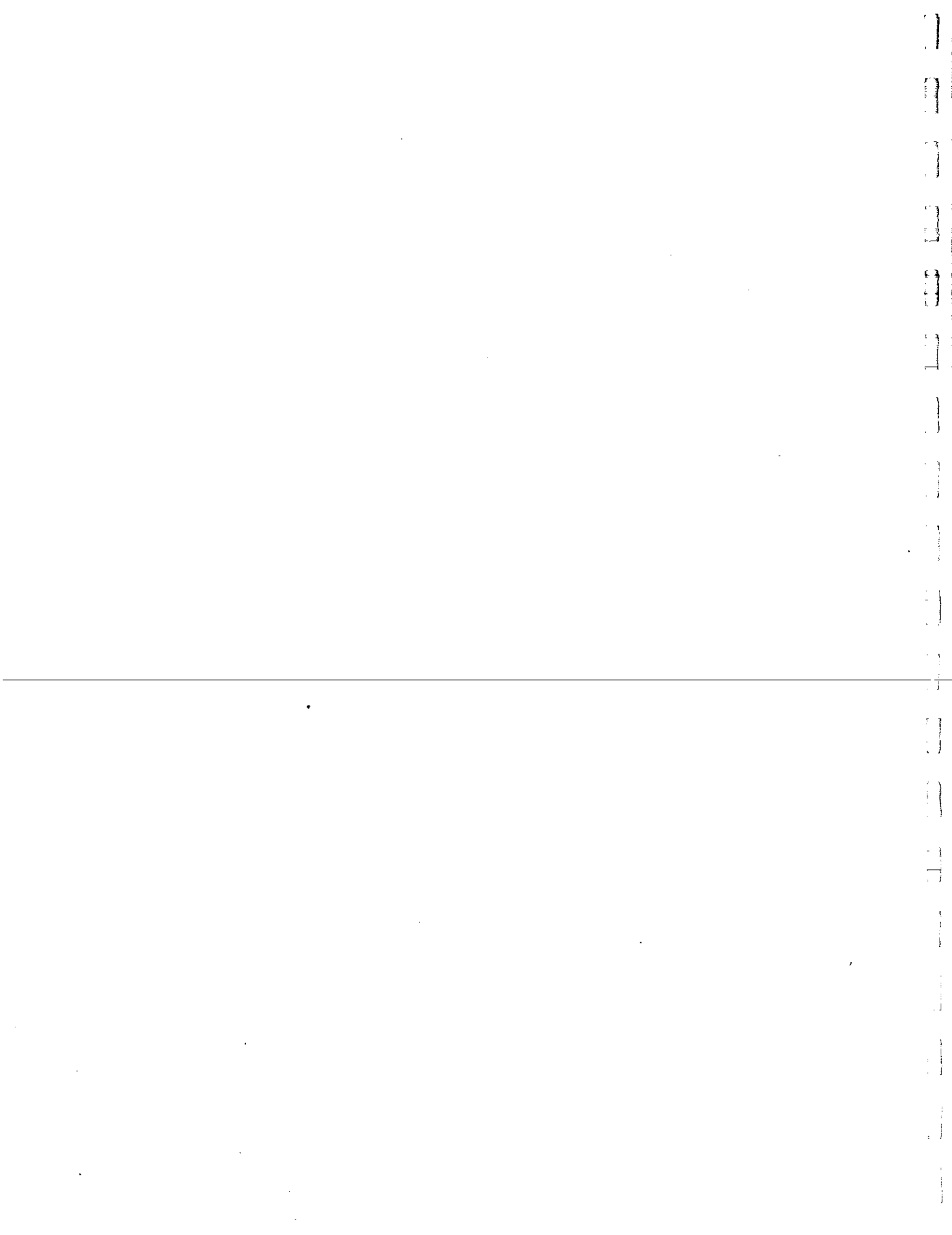
Ms. Sharon Wendel
Project Manager
Transition House

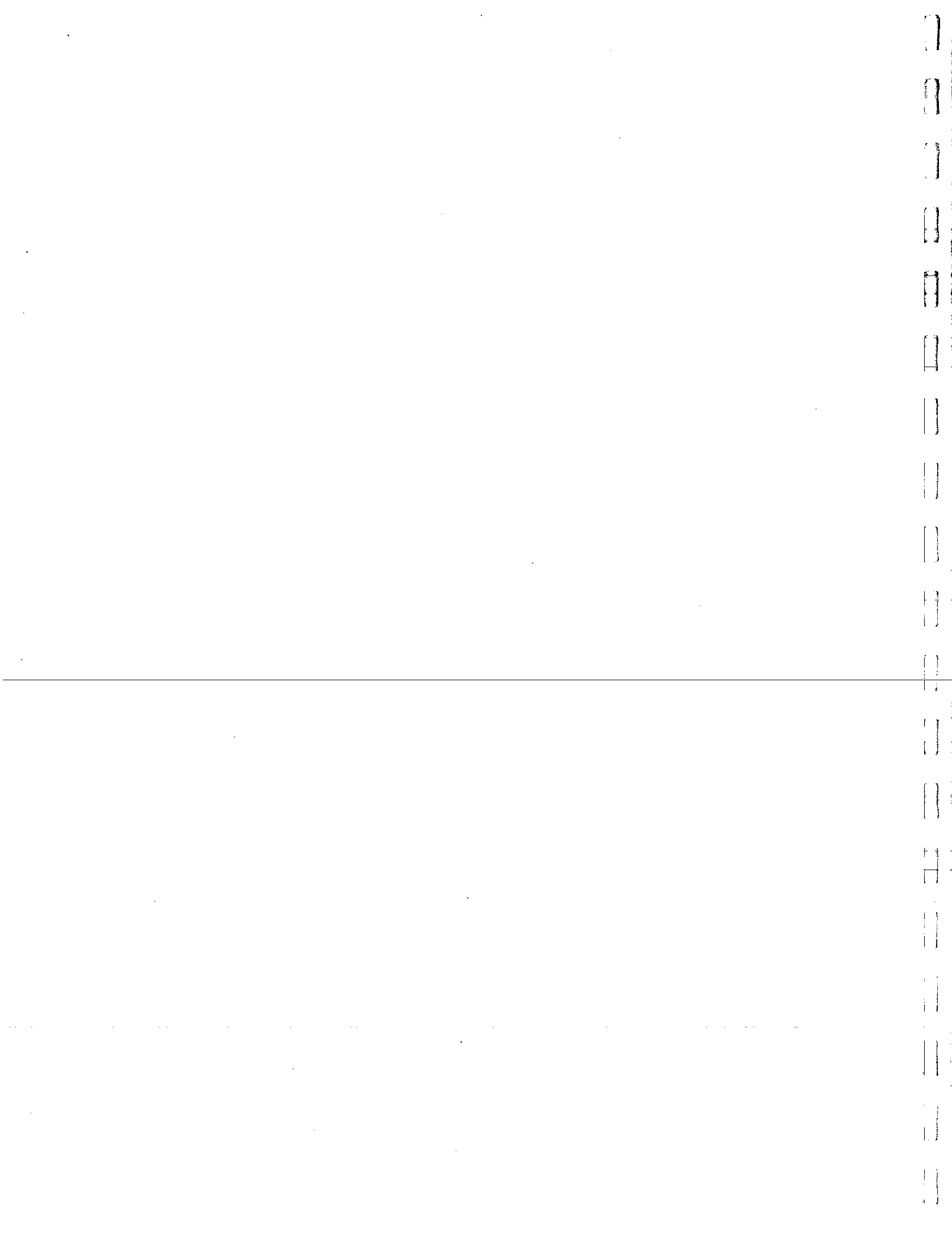# APPENDIX III

THE EDMONTON SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL

The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit, organization that has provided support to community groups, social service agencies in and around Edmonton since 1940.

While a commitment to researching social needs in the community has always been important for the Council, it has, over the years, also developed an excellent reputation in other aspects of social planning. Using a community development approach, the Council is recognized as an excellent source of information and support to agencies and groups who wish to take some action on their own behalf. The Council has shown leadership in working to increase public awareness of social issues in the community, and it has always been willing to advocate on behalf of disadvantaged groups.

The Council's recent activities have included a series of support groups for unemployed men and women, the development of an advocacy training programme and an advocacy network for those on social allowance, the publication of **Doing It Right: A Needs Assessment Workbook**, research on voluntarism in Alberta and the conduct of programme evaluations for community agencies.

Apart from its many research studies, the Council publishes **First Reading**, a bi-monthly newsletter on current social issues, and **Alberta Facts**, a series of factsheets on poverty in Alberta. For further information on the work or publications of the Council please contact:

The Edmonton Social Planning Council
#41. 9912 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta   T5K 1C5
tel. (403) 423-2031

APPENDIX IV

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

Ms. Linda MacLeod

Linda MacLeod is a freelance researcher, writer, and policy analyst, and has written and spoken extensively in the areas of family violence, criminology, social welfare, employment, and the status of women. She holds a Master's degree in Sociology from York University, and is completing a Doctorate from the same university. She is the author of **Battered But Not Beaten: Wife Battering in Canada** (1987), published by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and of several articles on wife battering, including "A Changing Vision of Wife Battering" in **Transition** 18:3 (September 1988), a publication of the Vanier Institute of the Family, in Ottawa, Ontario. Linda recently spoke on the issue of wife battering to the 1989 National Forum on Family Violence (June 18-21, Ottawa, Ontario), and was the keynote speaker to the Saskatchewan Provincial Association of Transition Houses (February 1989).

Mr. Peter Faid

Peter Faid is presently the Executive Director of the Edmonton Social Planning Council; a position he has held since 1981. He holds a Master's degree in Political Science and another in Social Policy. He is presently working to complete his Doctorate (London School of Economics). Peter has also been a sessional lecturer with the Faculty of Social Welfare, University of Calgary, Edmonton Division, where he has taught Social Policy and Social Planning. Peter has spent considerable time working with volunteer boards and agency staff throughout Alberta, and under his direction, the Edmonton Social Planning Council has developed an excellent reputation for its work in the area of welfare rights, poverty, and unemployment. Since joining the Council he has had extensive experience in conducting programme evaluations, administrative reviews, and needs assessments with a wide range of non-profit organizations and various levels of government.