



PCVI News

Issue 4 / Volume 1



Welcome

The Department of Justice would like to thank its federal, provincial, and territorial partners for making the Northern Responses and Approaches to Victims of Crime Conference 2009 in Yellowknife such a huge success. Those who attended benefited from three days of productive dialogue, learning, and information sharing which will lead to “northern solutions” to the unique challenges faced by victims of crime in the north. Delegates had the opportunity to share ideas and best practices on a wide range of issues, including understanding the justice system, working with vulnerable victims of crime, community capacity building, and self care. More importantly, the conference has built upon the spirit of collaboration and cooperation among victim service professionals across Canada. As we witnessed in Yellowknife, there is so much we can learn from each other. We encourage all our partners to use this Conference as a starting point for an on-going discussion about the work we do, and we are confident that it will be a springboard to advancing responsive approaches to victim services in every region of our country.

Pamela Arnott
Director and Senior Counsel, Policy Centre for Victim Issues

Catherine Kane
Senior General Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section



Northern Responses and Approaches to Victims of Crime... Building on Strength and Resilience was held in Yellowknife from September 29 – October 1, 2009. More information about the conference can be found at www.justice.gc.ca/northernconference2009 or by emailing yellowknife2009@justice.gc.ca

The Conference

The landmark conference, which was two years in the making, brought together victim services professionals from across the Northern regions of Canada to participate in over 25 workshops and hear from three keynote speakers. The attendees, made up of front-line service providers for victims of crime, provincial and territorial Directors of Victim Services, federal policy and program analysts, and non-governmental organizations, also enjoyed top quality entertainment by local Yellowknife and Aboriginal artists during the opening reception and banquet hosted by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Conference participants had the chance to hear from the Honourable Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, The Minister of Justice of NWT Jackson Lafferty, the Minister of Justice for Nunavut Keith Peterson, the Minister of Health and Social Services for

NWT Sandi Lee, and the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime Steve Sullivan. Workshops were organized along four themes: understanding the justice system; working with vulnerable victims and witnesses; community capacity building and self-care.

While it was the Policy Centre for Victim Issues that lead the planning committee for the conference, this event never could have happened without the support of our partners. The conference's success is truly a testament to the great work that can be done when federal, territorial, and provincial governments, work together with their partners.

Couldn't make it to Yellowknife?

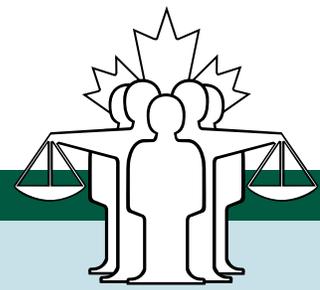
Just because you couldn't make it to Yellowknife doesn't mean you can't benefit from the dialogue and information that took place. To learn more

about what was shared in the conference please check the conference website. It has been updated and lists all the workshops and presenters. www.justice.gc.ca/northernconference2009.

In addition, many of the presentations that were made during the conference workshops are available for distribution. By accessing these presentations, you will be able to share in the best practices and other knowledge which was shared throughout the three days. Requests for presentations can be made to yellowknife2009@justice.gc.ca.

If you know someone who was at the conference, encourage them to share what they learned. This could range from a formal briefing to your group, to a casual chat over a cup of coffee. No matter how you do it, take the opportunity to use your colleagues' experience to strengthen the work you do for victims of crime.





Facts about Crime in the North¹

- Residents of the territories were three times more likely than provincial residents to experience a violent victimization such as sexual assault, robbery or physical assault (315 versus 106 incidents per 1,000 population).
- Approximately 12% of northern residents reported being the victim of some form of violence at the hands of a current and/or previous spouse or common-law partner in the five years preceding the survey. This compares to 7% of the population in the provinces.

- Police-reported crime rates in the territories were substantially higher than rates in the rest of Canada. Specifically, in 2005, crime rates in the North were over four times higher than rates in the provinces (33,186 compared to 7,679 incidents per 100,000 population).

Facts about the Conference

- Over 275 participants from all 13 of Canada's provinces and territories, represented over 100 different organizations who work with victims of crime or on victim issues in northern communities.

- 25 workshops occurred on a range of topics affecting victims of crime in the North.
- Over 9500 human hours spent networking, sharing, and learning with fellow victim services workers.

¹ 2004 General Social Survey

In our next issue

National Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2010 is April 18-24, 2010. It is the fifth anniversary of Victims Week – stay tuned for more special events!

Interview

Lesley Carberry, Yukon Department of Justice

Lesley is the Director of Victim Services and Community Justice for the Yukon Department of Justice. This new Branch is responsible for victim services, community justice, and crime prevention and evaluation.

Q What are some of the challenges facing victim services providers in Yukon?

A Indian residential schools have had a long lasting, profound, complex and intergenerational impact on individuals, families, and communities in the Yukon. Also, because our communities are small and closely-knit, crime has far-reaching impacts on individuals, family members, friends, and entire communities. Women, particularly Aboriginal women, experience high rates of victimization in domestic violence and sexualized assault. Communities want to be involved in providing responses and developing solutions to this victimization. All of these challenges provide us with real opportunities to work together in addressing the individual and systemic challenges facing victims of crime, families and communities.

Q What is the Yukon Government doing to help victims of crime?

A The Yukon Department of Justice currently provides short term crisis counselling, court

support, and public awareness services to communities across Yukon. In August 2009, the Government also released its Victims of Crime Strategy, which is co-led by the Department of Justice and the Women's Directorate. It is a framework document to guide programs and services for victims of crime. In addition to drafting a *Yukon Victims of Crime Act*, we will continue to strengthen our focus on the needs of victims of crime, address violence against women, work on mentorship and capacity building in communities, and integrating our responses for victims, offenders, families and communities. More details on the Strategy can be found at: http://www.justice.gov.yk.ca/pdf/Victims_of_Crime_Strategy_web.pdf.

Q How did the Northern Conference help to address these challenges?

A The conference was a timely opportunity to have a range of Yukon service providers come together, make Yukon-based connections, and participate in networking that was long overdue. Our workshops facilitated a very productive level of dialogue among a number of service providers which resulted in the development of some very useful training and education materials. Yukon service providers, particularly those in community based organizations, were also able to network and connect with other territorial and provincial service providers, and to learn, first hand, more about the realities elsewhere in Canada. A number of our

Yukon service providers say they went home renewed, with a new sense of purpose and vision in their work. This renewed enthusiasm will greatly assist in implementing the Yukon Victims of Crime Strategy, and in supporting more coordinated and effective services to victims.

Q Is there anything specific that you learned at the Northern Conference that you are now using in your day-to-day activities?

A There was so much useful information learned at the conference that it's hard to identify just one specific activity. I can say that in general the conference confirmed for me that our situation in the north, and the way we respond, have some very unique elements. We need to continue to reflect on these unique elements in our ongoing programming work. For example, how we measure the impact of victim services programs – there is a great deal of focus, in many programming areas, on accountability and measurement. The Conference confirmed that we need to include, from beginning to end, traditional cultural views on what we mean by accountability, how we design programs and services, and how we include others in the assessment of the effectiveness of current and future programs and services.