



STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL NWT

# ***WE HEAR YOU***

A call for caring co-action to improve  
services for women experiencing  
intimate partner violence

**WORKBOOK**

The Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories recently completed a research project with women who have experienced intimate partner violence to find out where they feel most supported and the most abandoned in accessing services to gain back control of their lives. Twenty-one recommendations are available for download at the Status of Women Council website at [www.statusofwomen.nt.ca](http://www.statusofwomen.nt.ca)

*At the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories, we believe no single entity, group, or individual alone can improve the services available nor reduce the stigma associated with experiencing intimate partner violence.*

This workbook is designed to help you identify what you personally, professionally, organizationally or institutionally can do to improve services for women experiencing intimate partner violence.

*When you're going through this, it's amazing how much you're on your own. Instead of being told shortcuts of how to get somewhere, or who to talk to, you have to figure it out all on your own ... you're not eating, you're not sleeping, you're scared, you're a mess and you have to do everything yourself. I was just in sheer survival mode.*

### **How can you/your organization contribute to helping women fleeing intimate partner violence feel less alone?**

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### **How can you/your organization contribute to helping women fleeing intimate partner violence find those shortcuts to safety?**

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#### **Here are two recommendations from the Status of Women Council:**

- Encourage service providers across the intimate partner violence service continuum, to adopt a collaborative, long-term, holistic approach to the provision of services to women experiencing intimate partner violence and their children.
- Encourage the Government of the Northwest Territories to establish a multi-sectoral working group, consisting of relevant service providers, women's organizations, government and community representatives and decision-makers, and Elders, to review practices and models from other jurisdictions that could be adopted and adapted to the Northwest Territories to reduce the stigma and improve intimate partner violence services.



*Every remote community needs emergency support services and some kind of emergency safe home or a shelter, where women like me don't have to make decisions to leave their community right in the minute, we can just breathe. When you're going through abuse like that, it's difficult to think what I'm going to do a week from now or two weeks from now. You need time to sit down and talk to your parents, your siblings, and your friends.*

### **How can you/your organization contribute to helping women fleeing intimate partner violence be safe in their home communities?**

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#### **Here is an example of what the Status of Women Council recommends could be done.**

- Encourage relevant stakeholders, partners, women's organizations, and governments to adopt a collaborative, inter-agency approach to ensure that women experiencing intimate partner violence have timely access to safety resources. These resources should include safe phones, safe transportation, and safe homes or family violence shelters in all communities in the territory. These efforts should also ensure that women and their male children aged fifteen (15) or older have access to safe shelter when leaving a violent home.



*They should have a few counsellors who know about intimate partner violence. When you're living in a situation where you're living in fear, it's a little different than trying to get over arachnophobia. It's a different kind of counselling.*

### **What can you/your organization do to be better skilled in responding to the unique needs of women experiencing intimate partner violence?**

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### **What can you do to ensure the cultural safety of another?**

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#### **Here's what the Status of Women Council recommends be done.**

- Encourage stakeholders and partner organizations to work together to provide consistent and coordinated intimate partner violence training and trauma- and violence-informed training to service providers. Consistent and coordinated training supports a comprehensive and similar understanding of intimate partner violence. This training should impress upon the service providers the need to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the women they are helping, and support providing services in a non-judgmental manner. This training should be complemented by community-based cultural safety and cultural competency training to reflect the diverse cultures, cultural practices, and norms of those living in the Northwest Territories.

*We need someone to talk to kids after they experience trauma or witness violence, because they remember it. Someone who could relate to what they're going through and to help them overcome or deal with it. Sometimes children keep everything inside and all of a sudden it's like an explosion and they don't know how to deal with it or manage it.*

**How can you/your organization help/advocate for children exposed to intimate partner violence?**

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**Here is what the Status of Women Council recommends could be done.**

- Mitigate the effects of exposure to intimate partner violence and/or experiencing family violence on children and youth, and help children and youth heal, to lead full and productive lives, and to end the cycle of violence by identifying, implementing, and evaluating early intervention activities to prevent and/or mitigate trauma to children and youth and providing specialized, trauma- and violence-informed counselling/mental health services to children and youth to support healing and breaking the cycle of violence.
- Encourage the Government of the Northwest Territories to establish an independent, non-partisan Child and Youth Advocate Office to support and protect our young people, to ensure their voices are heard, and to promote the rights of our young people especially in relation to government programs, services, and legislation.

*I know people think I should just tell someone and get help – even my friends and family tell me that. But sometimes you feel embarrassed to tell anyone, even a friend ... women feel that everyone is judging them. One time right after I talked to the cops, everyone in my husband's family ... kept convincing me to let it go, just let it go, that it was a family matter.*

**Women experiencing intimate partner violence know the stigma and shame of coercive control and intimate partner violence. How can you/your organization help empower women to break free from this stigma and shame?**

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**Here's what the Status of Women Council recommends be done.**

- Enhance intimate partner violence awareness, education, and prevention efforts across the territory to be undertaken by community partners, service providers, and government entities. These efforts could include:
  - Awareness and education activities to address victim blaming, shaming, and to counter the normalization of intimate partner violence.
  - Engaging with the general public, including men and boys, and decision-makers to create greater awareness and understanding of intimate partner violence, its causes, and the solutions as a means of creating individual and social change to reduce violence and create equality.
  - Providing healthy relationship, conflict resolution, and violence awareness and prevention education to children and youth within the education system and through other community-determined means to empower them to live violence free and healthy lifestyles and in doing so, to break the cycle of violence.



All 21 of the recommendations of the Status of Women Council of the NWT reflect the necessity and urgency of a change that is transformative and multi-generational.

# You can be part of this transformative change.

What's your action plan?

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The 21 recommendations made by the Status of Women Council can be found in the report "We Hear You: a call for caring co-action to improve services to women experiencing intimate partner violence" available for download at the Status of Women Council website at [www.statusofwomen.nt.ca](http://www.statusofwomen.nt.ca). If you would like the Status of Women Council of NWT to meet with your organization, send your request to [janet@nwtwomen.ca](mailto:janet@nwtwomen.ca).



## Notes

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*Status of Women Council  
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