

# PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND BULLYING COMMUNITY ACTION GUIDE

## Gather Stakeholders



# CO-ORDINATED COMMUNITY ACTION IS HOW THINGS GET DONE

Most community processes to prevent family violence and bullying begin with a few committed people who agree that:

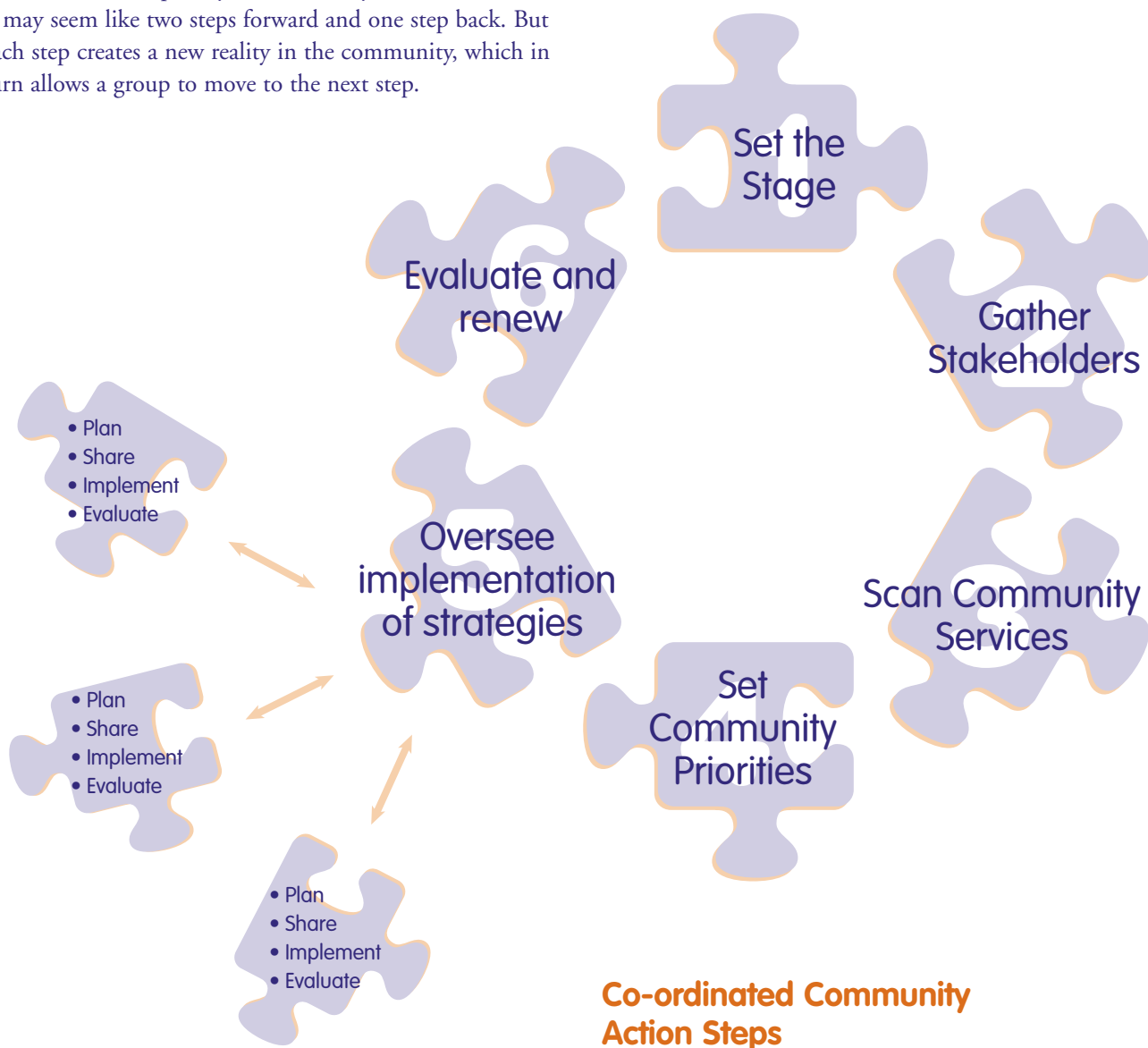
- Family violence and bullying exist in their community;
- Their community will be better without family violence and bullying; and
- They are willing to get involved in making a difference.

Discussions, research and experience tell us that successful community processes include the steps illustrated in the “Co-ordinated Community Action Steps” diagram.

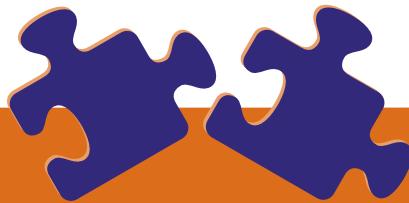
It is helpful to keep in mind that as a group moves through phases of a community action process, some steps may be tentative, some steps may be a bit messy, and sometimes it may seem like two steps forward and one step back. But each step creates a new reality in the community, which in turn allows a group to move to the next step.

In Alberta and elsewhere, we know that committed co-ordinated action by people within communities begins to change the world. If we look back five or 10 years in Alberta, we see that though there is still work to be done, we have also made progress toward creating an Alberta in which children, youth and families are free from violence and bullying.

One step in a co-ordinated community action process is to connect with other thoughtful committed people (“stakeholders”) who might want to be part of the process. The rest of this module suggests some ways you might make these connections.



# Gather Stakeholders



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This is the second of six modules in the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Action Guide series:

Module 1: Set the stage for community action

**Module 2: Gather stakeholders**

Module 3: Scan community services

Module 4: Set community priorities

Module 5: Oversee implementation of strategies

Module 6: Evaluate and renew

These modules and other resources about family violence and bullying are available from:

The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying

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## KEY DEFINITIONS

### Family violence

Family violence is the abuse of power within relationships of family, trust or dependency that endangers the survival, security or well-being of another person. It can include many forms of abuse including spouse abuse, senior abuse and neglect, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, parent abuse, and witnessing abuse of others in the family. Family violence may include some or all of the following behaviours: physical abuse, psychological abuse, criminal harassment/stalking, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, and spiritual abuse.

### Bullying

Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate and repeated hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm, and/or a threat of aggression. When bullying escalates unabated, it may lead to a feeling of terror on the part of the individual being bullied. Bullying may include, but is not limited to: physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name calling; threatening looks, gestures or actions; cruel rumours; false accusations; and social isolation.

## ABOUT THIS MODULE

Communities are where differences are made. People working together can accomplish miracles.

During the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying, two consistent themes of the roundtable discussions were:

- We have to **work together**; and
- We have to **build on** the work that has already happened.

This is the second of six modules in the **Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Action Guide**. The purpose of the guide is to provide information that will help communities work together and build on what has already been done to create an Alberta free from violence and bullying.

In preparation for a community action process, **Module 2** provides information about identifying and gathering stakeholders. The other modules provide information about other steps in a co-ordinated community action process.

Like individuals, communities are affected by the larger environment in which they live. The following information about Alberta's priorities for action may be helpful to your community as it gathers stakeholders to take action so that children, youth and families are free from family violence and bullying.

# THE ALBERTA CONTEXT

## Thousands set priorities for action

Family violence and bullying have no place in Alberta society. It's time for action.

That was the key message coming from a comprehensive province-wide roundtable process on family violence and bullying. The process involved a broad cross-section of Albertans including victims of family violence and bullying, experts, community organizations, Aboriginal peoples and interested Albertans.

The provincial government reviewed the wealth of ideas and advice received. In October 2004, the provincial government released *Finding Solutions Together*, which sets out key areas for action.

*Finding Solutions Together* reinforces a clear message that solutions for preventing family violence and bullying must be developed together – by individuals committing to positive change, by involving all members of a family in the healing process, by community people working

together, and by government supporting communities to reach their goals.

**More than 3,000 people identified these critical starting points** that we need to understand as we work together to create an Alberta free from violence and bullying:

- Family violence and bullying are everyone's business;
- Family violence and bullying are clearly linked, although the strategies for addressing them may be different;
- A lot of important work is already underway, and the focus of next steps is to build on that foundation;
- It will take time to achieve the goals;
- Family violence and bullying affect people of all ages, all incomes and all cultures. We need to tailor our actions to be effective for the broad range of people affected;
- No single entity – whether that's a family, a community, or the provincial government – can solve this problem alone. Solutions must be found together;
- More work will be done in the coming years to assess progress, set priorities and expand actions.



## Finding solutions together: Key areas for action

The long-term vision is to create an Alberta where children and families are free from family violence and bullying. To work as partners toward this vision, participants at the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying identified five key areas for action for individuals, families, communities and governments. The key areas for long-term action – social change; provincial leadership; collaborative, co-ordinated community response; services and supports; accountability - are outlined in a report on the roundtable entitled *Finding Solutions Together*.

### Social change

- Change public awareness, knowledge and attitudes
- Invest in our society
- Focus on prevention and education
- Place a higher priority on early intervention
- Expand mentoring and community leadership
- Address stereotypes and racism involving Aboriginal people and communities.

### Provincial leadership

- Establish enabling legislation
- Maintain a long-term sustainable commitment
- Enhance the cross-ministry approach
- Establish a single, cross-sector agency to take the lead
- Respect and address Aboriginal jurisdictional issues through co-operation among Aboriginal, federal and provincial governments.

### A collaborative, co-ordinated community response

- Establish a collaborative, co-ordinated community model
- Provide support for collaboration
- Establish long-term sustainable community solutions
- Expand the use of multi-disciplinary teams
- Expand education and training for those who work with Aboriginal communities
- Provide cross-sector training
- Ensure that essential information can be shared
- Build Aboriginal community resources and capacity.



### Services and supports

- Ensure equitable access to services and supports
- Establish a single point of access to services and supports
- Enable safe reporting
- Ensure advocates are available for victims
- Expand the availability of emergency/safe housing
- Provide transitional support(s)
- Provide treatment and counselling
- Ensure adequate protection services
- Address concerns with custody and access disputes
- Ensure that services and supports respond to those affected by family violence and bullying
- Ensure an effective justice response
- Use a holistic approach that reflects Aboriginal culture and tradition
- Improve access to and availability of services in Aboriginal communities.

### Accountability

- Support evidence-based practices and expand community-based research and evaluation, including expanded research in Aboriginal communities
- Establish and track measurable outcomes
- Ensure transparency and clear reporting of outcomes achieved by all partners including community agencies, organizations and provincial ministries
- Reinforce consequences for actions and individual accountability.

## GATHER STAKEHOLDERS

Module 2 of the Co-ordinated Community Action Planning Guide is focused on processes your community group can use as it gathers stakeholders to respond to family violence and bullying in the community.

Three steps in gathering stakeholders are:

- Identifying the stakeholders;
- Designating a co-ordinating committee and leadership team;
- Staying connected with all stakeholders.

## IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS

Many people in your community are probably already involved with children, youth and families affected by family violence and bullying. The people involved may or may not know each other, and they may or may not work together.

A first step in preparing for a community action process is to identify **four kinds of “stakeholders”** who may

have an interest in working with others to prevent family violence and bullying:

- People directly affected by family violence and bullying;
- People whose work brings them in contact with family violence and bullying;
- People who can contribute something to community action on family violence and bullying. Contributions could include, for example, time, expertise and experience, publicity, facilities, equipment, money, influence, services and support;
- People who must approve some aspect of actions to prevent family violence and bullying.

Some individuals or organizations could fit into more than one of the above four categories.

**Examples of possible stakeholders** could include but are not limited to:

- Justice system: police, victim services, Crown prosecutors, probation and correctional services;
- Emergency shelters: agencies specifically set up to assist people affected by family violence;





- Health representatives: emergency medical services, emergency departments, health promotion and injury prevention, public health, mental health, health practitioners;
- Child and Family Services Authorities: child protection/ child welfare, community liaison workers, family violence specialists;
- Schools: principals, counsellors, family-school liaison workers;
- Community-based organizations: family-serving agencies, counselling services;
- Municipalities: elected municipal councillors, Family and Community Support Services;
- Parent support programs: centres or other family resource programs;
- Aboriginal service providers;
- Faith-based organizations;
- AADAC or other addictions services;
- Youth, elders, interested citizens;
- Businesses.

Although there are similarities in the dynamics of family violence and the dynamics of bullying, stakeholders for the two issues may be different.

## **DESIGNATE A FAMILY VIOLENCE AND/OR BULLYING CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

If your community already has a co-ordinating committee related to family violence and bullying, you may not need to do this step. The people involved can decide how an existing co-ordinating committee can make use of the information in these Community Action Planning Guide modules.

If your community does not have an over-arching committee related to family violence and bullying, you may find the following process helpful in forming a co-ordinating committee to focus on family violence and/or bullying.

## Arrange an initial gathering to form a co-ordinating committee

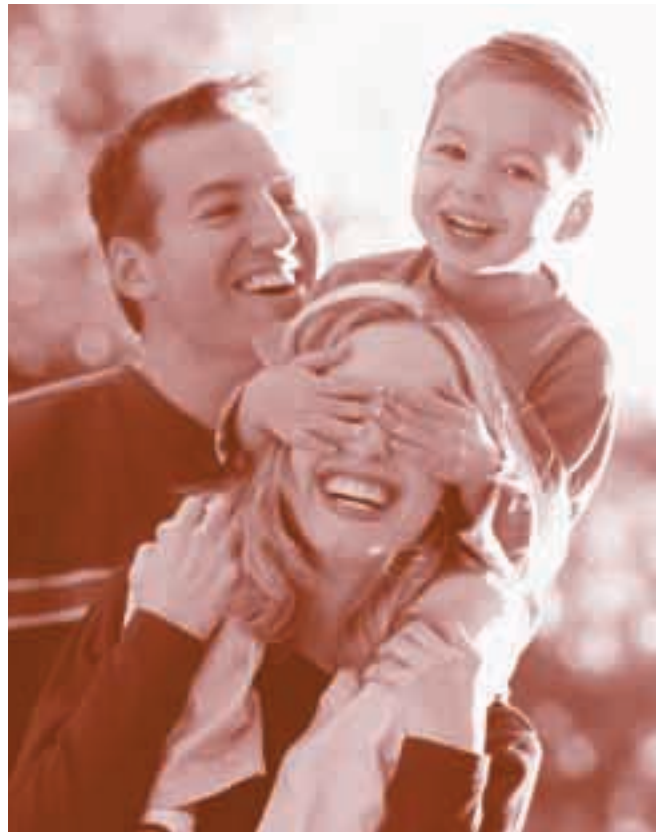
1. **Review the list of stakeholders** who have some connection to family violence and bullying. Identify those who might like to know that a co-ordinating committee is being formed, and who might like to be invited to take part in a meeting to form a co-ordinating committee.

When in doubt about whether someone would be interested, err on the side of inclusion. That is, when in doubt, ask people to participate. It is better to have someone decline an invitation, than to have that person feel ignored or shut out of the process.

2. **Send invitations to a meeting.** Your invitation should explain the purpose of the meeting and include an agenda, as well as providing the time, place and who is invited.

## Conduct the initial meeting

1. **Explain** what has led to the invitation to this meeting, who was involved in setting it up, and who has agreed to chair the meeting.
2. **Arrange** for introductions of everyone in the room: their name, organization, connection with family violence and bullying, and (perhaps) why they agreed to attend this meeting.
3. **Agree on the purpose and role** of the co-ordinating committee for prevention of family violence and bullying:
  - Outline possible roles of a co-ordinating committee. For example, “Oversee development of a comprehensive collaborative community response to family violence and bullying”;
  - Go around the room and ask everyone to comment on the possible roles they would like a co-ordinating committee to have;
  - Based on this discussion, write down roles that are commonly agreed upon by the group. Agree that someone will write up a draft “terms of reference” or “terms of engagement” for a family violence and bullying co-ordinating committee;
  - Distribute the draft terms of reference back to everyone at the meeting for comment.
4. **Identify who** has agreed to be a member of a co-ordinating committee for prevention of family violence and bullying, and two or three individuals who might act as a leadership team for the co-ordinating committee.



- Ask for volunteers, ask for nominations, or use whatever processes are customary in your community for appointing people to a leadership team to carry out tasks on behalf of a group in cases where committee representation is required.
  - If someone suggests the name of a person not in attendance, and those present are in agreement that this would be an appropriate member of the co-ordinating committee or leadership team, arrange for someone in the room to contact that person and invite him or her to be a member.
  - Confirm to the whole group the names (confirmed and intended) of who is going to be a member of the co-ordinating committee for prevention of family violence and bullying.
5. **Agree on next steps**, including:
    - Who will do what by when, to arrange for the first meeting of the leadership team, for writing and distributing draft terms of reference of the leadership team;
    - The date and place of the next gathering of the total group, or the circumstances under which a gathering will be called;
    - How the total group will be informed of whatever happens next.

## Confirm roles of leadership team members

1. **Terms of reference:** At the first meeting of the leadership team, develop or refine a draft of the terms of reference for the leadership team.

Terms of reference should include at least the following points:

- The purpose and over-all role of the leadership team;
- Who (names of people, or types of people) is on the leadership team;
- How members of the leadership team are selected or appointed;
- What tasks or actions the leadership team will carry out, and by when;
- To whom the leadership committee is accountable;
- What decisions the leadership committee is authorized to make;
- How and when the leadership team will communicate or report to those to whom it is accountable;
- What resources (if any) the leadership committee can use to carry out its work.

2. **Roles of committee members (chair, secretary, etc.)**

The leadership team should decide what roles individual members will have. For example, does the team need a chair or a recording secretary? If so, it will appoint people to those roles and be clear what the expectations are for the roles.

3. **Distribute the terms of reference** to all those who were at the initial gathering to discuss formation of a leadership team. As well, the leadership team should arrange to communicate the names of the chair, recording secretary, or other leadership team “officers,” and any work plans the leadership team develops for carrying out its tasks.

## Plan to plan

One of the first tasks of a new Family Violence and Bullying Co-ordinating Committee will be to plan how to develop a process for scanning community services and choosing priorities for next steps in developing a co-ordinated community action plan to address family violence and bullying.

## STAY CONNECTED WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

### How will different stakeholders be involved?

For both family violence and bullying, different stakeholders may want to be involved in different ways, such as:

- Receiving information about what is happening;
- Being consulted about proposed actions;
- Contributing time, materials, facilities, expertise, or funds;
- Participating in making decisions;
- Being involved in carrying out decisions;
- Approving certain aspects of a plan.

Some stakeholders may want to take a leadership role in a comprehensive community strategy to address family violence and bullying. Some stakeholders may wish to help with specific projects that are part of a larger strategy. Some stakeholders may wish merely to be informed or consulted at specific stages of a process.

### Communicate, communicate, communicate

Over time, it is helpful to arrange for ways to communicate with each stakeholder group or individual, to discuss what is happening and to ask how each stakeholder is willing or would like to be involved and informed.

At each new phase of a co-ordinated community action planning process it is important to look again at potential stakeholders, take steps to determine how they wish to be involved, and what is the best method to keep stakeholders informed.

**The next step in the co-ordinated community action process is to scan community services.** Module 3 of the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Action Guide will provide information on scanning community services.

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