

**Domestic Relationship/Violence Initiative
Committee
Terms of Reference
August 26, 2004**

A. INTRODUCTION

Representatives from social agencies, Mental Health, RCMP, Child and Family Services Authority, Family and Community Support Services, municipalities, Justice, other key players, and the general public will form a strong, committed and sustainable Steering Committee to coordinate an improved community response to domestic violence and all those impacted by it in Central Alberta.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Red Deer Domestic Violence & Relationship Steering Committee (Steering Committee) formed in the spring of 1999 to support the eradication of domestic violence in Central Alberta. There was a perceived need for an improved community response to this issue, and it was recognized that “working together” would lead to better service provision and education. The original members included representatives from the Central Alberta Women’s Emergency Shelter, RCMP, Central Alberta Sexual Assault Centre, SPCA, Addictions, CAWOS, Justice. Many of the original purposes are still applicable today: to offer better support services for victims, ensure no duplication but working together to avoid/eliminate shuffle of victims, and to provide education for front line workers. Successes to date include:

- cross-training workshops for community
- Binder created – can be found on CIRS website
- Grants received from FEDS, CRIME/RCMP, SOL GEN to support initiatives
- Cards/Handout booklets developed
- Presentations on services
- Committee has positive reputation in community
- Supported members’ ongoing education of the general public (advertising on the back of buses, 2 day seminar, “Ask the Experts” monthly news column)
- People starting to understand violence is violence
- Professionals knowing who to contact, able to put a name to who we have contact with

With new committee members, a lack of “real action and progress” being felt by some, recent community tragedies and a desire to use the renewed public interest in the issue, there was a perceived need by the committee for their own revitalization and re-focus. The committee requested the facilitation assistance of Alberta Community Development for a planning day on March 30, 2004. As a result, the DVRSC now has a more formal vision; a confirmation of mission and mandate; a review and determination of committee roles and responsibilities, and some key future directions.

Vision: the Red Deer area is receiving a coordinated, effective and consistent response to domestic violence with strong mutually supportive and sustainable links among all applicable agencies and ministries.

Mission: The Domestic Violence and Relationship Committee will work together to support a proactive, coordinated and effective response to domestic violence. We will focus on providing education, a good community crisis response, as well as lobbying for systemic change to support a better future response. We will maintain forward movement by ensuring all key players are at the table, by defining a community action plan (with roles, responsibilities and timelines specified) and by providing a

strong network of organizations supporting positive changes and action to improve the response to domestic violence.

C. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The DRVI shall be comprised of representatives from “key player groups” across Central Alberta, including:

1. Social agencies providing services to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence (e.g. CAWES, CAWOS, Red Deer and District SPCA, Crisis Centre, Batterer’s Treatment)
2. Mental Health
3. Legal – i.e. Crown Prosecutors, Judges (criminal), Justice of Peace, Justice (Civil), Legal Aid, Probation
4. Diverse Culture Organizations (e.g. Aboriginal groups, CARE)
5. RCMP and Victim Services
6. Child and Family Services Authority
7. Family and Community Support Services
8. Municipality – City, county and rural
9. Faith Community
10. Education
11. Substance Abuse
12. Mediation Services
13. Other Basic Needs providers – e.g. SFI, AISH, WCB, HOUSING
14. Community Citizens

The committee will operate fairly informally under the administration of a non-profit agency in the field. The roles of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary will be appointed at the fall meeting annually. The Chairperson will chair meetings, act as media spokesperson for group and work with the Secretary to ensure an agenda is sent one week prior to meetings. The Secretary will handle correspondence, document meeting business and circulate to the group within a week, and keep the membership list current. Vice Chair will act as Chair when required. Sub-committees will be struck as appropriate. To maintain consistency and progress on goals, each member agency representative will be expected to provide a minimum of a two-year commitment. Members are expected to offer time voluntarily, with fair reimbursement of committee-related expenses, where necessary, pre-approved and within the committee budget.

Authority will come from the department or agencies that have membership on the committee, and will be limited to agreed upon initiatives of the collective committee, working within the operating principles (below). All decisions will be by consensus of those present at meetings. Any member may raise new business by approaching the Chairperson to request 10 minutes on agenda’s “new business”. New business must be consistent with committee’s mission, fit our strategic plan, and/or prove to be an urgent exception within mission.

The DRVI typically meets the 1st Wednesday AM of every. With help from outside facilitation, there will be an annual “planning day” in the Spring to review progress, celebrate success, update action plans and confirm committee membership.

D. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- We will support zero tolerance of domestic/relationship violence in Central Alberta
- We believe in a coordinated, effective, immediate, consistent response with no duplication and strong links among/by all applicable agencies
- We are dedicated to keeping our public representatives (government) informed on community issues and needs: re: domestic violence

- We are dedicated to ensuring the public is well informed on community resources and issues re: domestic violence
- We are dedicated to providing services to all affected by domestic violence – victims, family, pets, perpetrators
- We support the whole community taking ownership of domestic violence as a community concern that can be resolved
- We will act in a professional, ethical manner with respect for the mandates of the individual member agencies represented.

E. PROJECT BUDGET

At the annual planning day, time will be set aside to review expenditures and funding goals for the upcoming year. A sub-committee may be established to complete funding applications as necessary to implement strategies, and pay for committee meeting expenses.

F. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Interest in committee membership may be directed to the current DRVI Committee Secretary.