



Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution Options for Women Who Are Victims of Violence

Report of Atlantic Meeting
May 8 to 10, 2003 - Charlottetown PEI



It is really important that we all accept responsibility for creating safe and caring communities, to model for children how to treat each other and themselves, and to model strength and independence for women.

Passionate Perspective

This report highlights discussions of the Atlantic Gathering on Dispute Resolution and Violence Against Women. The purpose is to share information among participants and to assist with the development of an Atlantic Network. This report is true to the language and voices of the participants of the gathering.

Acknowledgments

The contributions of feminist thinking over the past thirty years has made possible the discussion of true justice for women who are victims of violence. The work of shelter organizations and women's centres has contributed to this understanding. Justice systems have also contributed to this understanding by clarifying their roles, improving their processes, and acknowledging their limits in keeping women safe. We acknowledge the differences of opinions within and among communities and justice systems which challenges us to listen and find ways to work together. Most importantly, we acknowledge the courage and experience of survivors of woman abuse who remind us that we are not there yet.

The Atlantic Meeting was made possible by the leadership of Kirstin Lund and organization of Christine Clements with support of an Atlantic Advisory Group. Status of Women Canada recognized the value of the Atlantic meeting and contributed funding support. The attention to hospitality and nurturing details provided a comfortable environment for challenging dialogue.

Participants from community organizations and government departments in Atlantic Canada valued our joint work and committed to travel, meet and dialogue. The result was unanimous support for an Atlantic Network on Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution and Violence Against Women.

We acknowledge the passion that energizes us to end violence against women. These passionate perspectives, if misunderstood, are also potential for deep conflict. The passionate perspectives of participants at the Atlantic Meeting are included throughout this report.

Atlantic Meeting Facilitators

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June, 2003

To use processes that work toward healing for all parties involved in violence and other trauma that leads to brokenness.

Passionate Perspective

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Summary

There is growing interest and increasing attention being given to the development of dispute resolution processes and Restorative Justice processes. Victims, victim advocates and communities need to have a voice in justice policy - specifically in determining what options are available and how they are implemented. To shift the perspective from the justice system to alternative dispute resolution processes and Restorative Justice processes is truly challenging. The goal of the Atlantic Project is to ensure that restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution options are fair, safe and do not re-victimize victims of violence. The project worked towards this goal by providing the opportunity for victims, victim advocates and community to gather, examine issues of concern and to be a voice in restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution policy in Atlantic Canada.

During the May 8-10th, 2003 gathering at the University of Prince Edward Island, participants used an interest based approach to identify values, needs, concerns and issues that need to be addressed to ensure that women have safe, victim centred, restorative justice and dispute resolution options. The needs and concerns, explored more deeply in small work groups, are loosely categorized into the following topics:

- Women's Equality and Empowerment
- Effective Processes
- Trained Competent Interveners
- Safe, Victim Centered Processes
- Effective Justice System
- Awareness and Education

The interest in creating an Atlantic Network was unanimous and next steps have been identified to move that agenda forward. There is tremendous need for clarity around definitions, expectations, and understandings of Restorative Justice and Alternative Dispute Resolution processes. Clarity is also essential in terms of structures and terms of reference of an emerging network. There is strong commitment to ensuring that an Atlantic Network is a gathering of perspectives - with participation from First Nations, those involved in family law, criminal law, survivors, community and government. Education and raising awareness is seen as essential and as such, building an effective communications network and encouraging the exchange of resources is fundamental to success. There is a sense that we can work together on these issues as an Atlantic Region and that we bring something unique and exciting to the work.

Participants in the Atlantic Project brought their passions. There was passion about keeping women and children safe, and ensuring that women are treated justly by our criminal justice and family law systems. We shared our passion about the hope of restorative justice, the potential of alternative dispute resolution processes and the need to stay victim focused. We are committed and passionate about empowerment, community building and collaborative partnerships. The next step is to organize, to work together, shape policy and programs and to create futures for our families and communities.

Restorative Justice/Dispute Resolution Options and Violence Against Women

Empower and support women; raise society's awareness. Create community responsibility for women's issues. Together we can create change.
Passionate Perspective

Background

The dynamics and history of violence against women are such that justice processes have the potential to re-victimize the victim more than in other types of offenses. Victims, victim advocates and communities need to have a voice in justice policy - specifically in determining what options are available and how they are implemented. It is increasingly important to have this input from victims, victim advocates and community when new options, such as restorative justice and dispute resolution approaches, are introduced. This helps protect against victims being re-victimized by the justice system. Survivors of violence, women's organizations which advocate for victims of violence, and supportive government staff need opportunities to dialogue in order to develop safe and effective responses to violence against women in Atlantic Canada.

Opportunities to work together in Atlantic Canada toward recommendations about restorative justice policy, will serve to increase the likelihood of collaboration between government policy makers and victim advocates. The work of Atlantic Coalition Building in the area of alternative dispute resolution was begun at the Making Waves Conference in Gander, NL in 1999. A follow-up conference in New Brunswick in 2001 continued that dialogue and it was determined that follow-up action was desirable.

In each of the Atlantic Provinces, there is great potential to inform restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution policy as each government is either planning or evaluating restorative justice programs. In addition some governments are planning or evaluating their family mediation programs.

Project

The goal of the Atlantic Project is to ensure that restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution options are fair, safe and do not re-victimize victims of violence. The project worked towards this goal by providing opportunities for victims, victim advocates and community to have a voice in restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution policy in Atlantic Canada.

The objectives of the Atlantic Project are:

- to build a coalition of women's organizations in Atlantic Canada determined to enhance,

in each province, the effectiveness of actions undertaken in the area of restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution in the context of family violence and violence against women.

- to provide opportunities for women who are victims of violence, and women's organizations which advocate for victims of violence, to dialogue and work together on the issue of restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution in the context of family violence and violence against women
- to provide an opportunity for women victims of violence, victim advocates and community, to be a part of the decision-making process and inform policy regarding restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution by using a gender-based and victim-centred analysis of restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution; and
- to raise awareness in the community and in the justice system about family violence and violence against women and potential issues of re-victimization of victims in restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution processes.

The Atlantic Meeting was one of three project activities.

Research

A compendium of restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution activities in each province, as well as any policy and research work, was compiled by the coordinated and informed dialogue at the Atlantic meeting.

Atlantic Coalition Building

The Atlantic Meeting brought together survivors of violence, victim advocates, equality seeking organizations, government policy makers and community dispute resolution service providers from Atlantic Canadian communities to dialogue about how to further the feminist analysis of alternative dispute resolution practices in the context of family violence and violence against women.

Regional Action Plan

The Regional Action Plan created at the Atlantic Meeting outlined priorities and next steps in working together to use a feminist analysis to inform policy regarding alternative dispute resolution and raise awareness in the community and in the justice system about the potential for re-victimization of victims in alternative dispute resolution processes.

Contribute and help change society and political views regarding violence against women. WE can change by becoming involved.

Passionate Perspective

The Atlantic Meeting

The whisper of restorative justice. The hope is getting louder.

Passionate Perspective

Skepticism.

Passionate Perspective

The Atlantic Meeting was held at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown from May 8 to 10, 2003. The purpose was to build a network across sectors and provinces for sharing information and influencing policy on restorative justice/dispute resolution and violence against women based on feminist analysis.

Approximately 40 women attended from community and government sectors in the four Atlantic provinces, including two people from federal government departments. Participants were selected because of their experience and work in violence against women, interest in or concerns about restorative justice and dispute resolution, and feminist understanding. (See Participant List - Appendix A)

The meeting agenda was focused and relaxed. The meeting process recognized that all participants had valuable knowledge and experiences to share. Once introductions and common interests were established, participants set the agenda of key issues, participated in dialogue groups and prepared reports. The agenda also included building consensus on the desire to have an Atlantic Network and a plan for implementation. (See Agenda - Appendix B)

Provincial Perspectives

Necessity for an alternative to present approach; one that is carefully structured with trained facilitators that gives a voice to women in the solutions to violence.

Passionate Perspective

The Compendium of Atlantic Canadian Resources on Dispute Resolution and Violence Against Women contains a summary of activities in each of the Atlantic Provinces. They are provided here in brief.

Nova Scotia

Bernadette MacDonald of the Pictou County Women's Centre, volunteered to do a short presentation on what is going on in NS, with regard to Restorative Justice, as she had participated in some of the work being done in the province to date, under the NS Women's Restorative Justice Research Committee (Bernadette has since become Women's Centres CONNECT's representative on this committee). Bernadette made reference to the Nova Scotia report Restorative Justice in Nova Scotia: Women's Experience and Recommendations for Positive Policy Development and Implementation that was available on the resource table and shared some of the concerns/issues that were in the report. The NS report expressed many of the same concerns previously shared by Heidi Rankin of PEI in her presentation, only the Nova Scotia concerns were directly from women in our communities who were survivors of violence. She also informed the meeting participants about the 2.5 day conference in Nova Scotia on NSRJI and this research and the process of engagement with the NS Dept of Justice. She also described that the NS RJ Committee was currently meeting with the Dept. of Justice on addressing the issues in the report and that there is currently a moratorium in place in NS.

Newfoundland and Labrador

In Newfoundland and Labrador, there have been a number of community-based activities in the area of alternative dispute resolution and restorative justice as well as an emerging Restorative Justice Coalition. Some initiatives are supported by the government, the majority of which are youth crime related. Thus far, few of these programs have specifically addressed the concerns raised by the Provincial Association Against Family Violence in their Status of Women Canada funded project reports, "Keeping an Open Mind: A Look at Gender Inclusive Analysis, Restorative Justice and Alternative Dispute Resolution" and "Making it Safe: Women, Restorative Justice and Alternative Dispute Resolution". The Association has, however, been asked to participate in a Provincial Advisory Group on Restorative Justice. Two federally funded Family Justice Projects, offering mediation around custody and access are in the evaluation phase which will assist in determining the future of the projects.

Prince Edward Island

In Prince Edward Island, the province, in co-operation with the community, is slowly working towards the use of restorative justice for youth and adults. Justice Options for Women projects, funded by Status of Women Canada, have laid the groundwork by working with women survivors of violence, victim advocates and justice system staff to dialogue about their needs and concerns about the justice system and create a framework for ensuring that justice options do not re-victimize women victims of violence. Projects have provided opportunities for research, dialogue and planning. The next step is to consider the option of a Domestic Violence Court. In the area of family mediation, services are currently available through the Office of the Attorney General and there is a possibility that these services will be expanded with the creation of a new Family Law Section.

New Brunswick

In New Brunswick, a government-led Provincial Advisory Committee on Restorative Justice was

struck in 2000 to determine the course of action in this area for the Province. Only one community-based women's organization, the Muriel McQueen Ferguson Foundation, was asked to participate.. In the area of family mediation, services are available through the Department of Justice. As part of the provincial Violence Against Women Strategy justice options for women are being considered.

What is Most Important as We Work Together

To see women rise above oppression and injustice to become empowered to be the best and happiest they can be.

Passionate Perspective

In small group discussions, people identified what is most important as we work together to develop restorative justice and dispute resolution options for women who are victims of violence. These most important interests - values, needs, concerns, are outlined in the following diagram, and were the foundation for identifying and dialoguing on issues:

Important Values, Needs and Concerns

Awareness & Education

- Clarity
- Values
- Vision

Concerns

- Single Option
- One-size for All
- One way to Think
- Revictimization of Women

Effective Justice System

Safe
Victim
Centred

Dynamics of Abuse

- Recognition
- Deep Knowledge
- Cautions

Supportive Families and Communities

**Trained/Competent Interveners
Effective Processes**

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Inclusive: policies and programs

Equality



Empowerment

Dialogue on Issues

Passion is about equality and living free from violence, and the need to mentor women to become leaders and decision makers.

Passionate Perspective

Participants identified key issues that need to be addressed to ensure that women have safe, victim centred restorative justice and dispute resolution options that meet the values, needs and concerns. These issues were the topics of dialogue and resulted in reports from discussion groups.

Women's Equality/Empowerment

What is it about Dispute Resolution and Restorative Justice that Resonates Deeply with Feminist principles?

Feminism is about meeting people's needs, allowing people to be heard- to have a voice in matters that affect them. Feminism is about collaborative partnerships, creating a community of care, support for victims and a commitment to move toward win/win resolutions. These intentions resonate with Restorative Justice. The women's movement was, in fact, one of the sources for Restorative Justice.

The resistance to Restorative Justice originates from a history of RJ being focussed on commitment to the offender population, backlash from the legal community and some bad experiences with programs promoted as RJ. The language and the lack of a clear and broadly accepted definition also raises concerns.

Clearly a common language, and widely accepted definitions are necessary. Because no one system will provide all the answers it may be helpful to move to a win/win strategy, balancing the needs of all involved and joining the effort rather than resisting it. RJ and dispute resolution processes must keep the goals of the individuals as important considerations. For example is the process operating from a premise of trying to end relationships or create healthy relationships?

Atlantic Canada may be a good climate for collaboration between provinces

Equality and Education: Is Equality achievable in RJ?

In an RJ process, Equality should be addressed, not only in terms of implementation, but as lifelong process, analysis, and education. Judges, Crown prosecutors and defense lawyers as well as the

community need to be educated about RJ and Equality issues. Some question the term “restoring” because it implies fixing or returning to an original state *V/S*. Redressing an imbalance, achieving accountability, and moving ahead, looking to the future. RJ approaches need to be victim initiated and voluntary. A victim’s expectations of the process must be addressed and there is a need for assessment prior to intervention, for both victim and offender.

Effective Processes

I see the power of collaboration to support victims. Powerful processes resulting in a positive outcome.

Passionate Perspective

Where Do Community Organizations Fit in Relation to Restorative Justice and Alternative Dispute Resolution?

We need to create partnerships and excellent communication at all levels, from the individual, to the community, and the systems. Community based organizations are the link between victim and systems, whether victims come from the community or from the justice system. Community based organizations must assume responsibility for accessing resources based on client need. There must also be recognition that systems such as the Criminal Justice System (CJS), need to share in this process and access community based organizations in the delivery of their services. Training at the community level is needed in areas around restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution. Community based agencies must assess their needs and seek the training deemed relevant. The process needs to be continually evaluated to assess what is or isn’t working.

Engaging the Support of Key Senior Officials: The need for gender analysis and victim centred approaches in Restorative Justice.

In order to engage the support of senior officials it is important to ensure there is a common voice. There is an assumption that if “tools” exist, (such as Gender Analysis) they will be used, but this is not necessarily the case. It makes sense to have practical application/evaluation and create personal awareness of gender analysis and victim centred approaches one policy at a time. Working at both the senior management and middle management levels is necessary with keen attention to timing. It is essential to do what you can, when you can and then try to move the process on. Since policies/changes are sustainable beyond the life of a senior official, it may be helpful to focus on getting support without necessarily trying to changing their “heads” around the issue? Senior officials may be interested from varied standpoints. Likewise vigilance and commitment is necessary to ensure the voices of Aboriginal people and their experiences are heard. It is not acceptable when work/programs are foisted onto community based groups without

the resources to back them up.

How Can Communities Keep a Woman Safe, and Buy into the Process?

Alternative Dispute Resolution processes and Restorative Justice constitute a paradigm shift and it will take time for others to consider it and come on board. First of all we need clarity of the concepts, followed by community consultation to (not as an add-on) to ensure that communities understand and get involved. Community buy-in has to originate with the community itself, not the government. Community meetings is one way to address issues in the community.

Communities want to be involved in what their justice system is doing and will become involved when they perceive relevance and that their issues can be addressed by RJ and ADR. We need to start by talking with the victims to find out what they need, then the idea of RJ might develop. Good experiences in the community leads to advocates who can pressure governments for programs and funding. Success with RJ takes a strongly linked involved community. We need people who are directly involved and affected to speak to others and be advocates.

How Can All Government and Community Based Organizations Communicate to Work for Solutions?

Community Service agencies cannot communicate amongst themselves because of confidentiality rules. Confidentiality can be a barrier between community and government agencies working together. The client should be more involved in determining confidentiality - the client knows best, not us. While it is important to honour the confidentiality of women (permission forms are needed to release information), there is an issue with those files being admissible to court.

Services can be duplicated because of piecemeal development, gaps should be filled.

How to Respond to Difference?

Should we have separate systems or integrated systems that are responsive and sensitive to various cultures? Restorative Justice programs may be more responsive than courts to cultural structures. Best practices and protocols need to be developed and all service providers should be made aware of these through training - not just through written forms. The community may have a role in monitoring, implementation and evaluation.

Opportunity to accomplish more than court: contextual understanding, voice for victim, break the cycle of abuse; abusers as victims

Passionate Perspective

Trained Competent Interveners

What do service providers need to do to make services to abused women safe, appropriate and helpful?

In some cases services providers of various kinds of programs do not make an effort to make women in abusive situations safe or ensure their feelings are respected and understood. Service providers have their own mind-set, for example the RCMP and Health Care workers have their own values, and beliefs. Sensitivity Training of service providers would be very beneficial. There should be co-ordination of services that are long-term, and are gender based with properly trained service providers, such as therapists for women who have been sexually abused

The key words in providing RJ and dispute resolution services are: voluntary, sustainable and flexible. Yet there are implied pressures for women to go through the mediation process. How can mediation help settle issues where violence is a factor?

Women in abusive situations need legal advise as it relates to child support, custody and access and the division of matrimonial assets. A good, strong family law advocate would be in the woman's best interest as well as the interest of the children..

Safe, Victim Centered

Empower and support women, raise society's awareness. Create community responsibility for women's issues. Together we can create change.

Passionate Perspective

What Does Women/Victim Centered Restorative Justice Look Like?

In situations where women are victims of violent acts it is necessary to ensure RJ processes are victim initiated, voluntary and victim driven with the victims needs in the forefront. It means that care, attention and decision making is given to the victim. This might include choices in how the forum is set up and delivered including choices about the facilitator. The process must be inclusive in all aspects.

In order to do this work, well-trained community facilitators are necessary (not someone from the criminal justice system or RCMP, for example). Programs and services should be adequately funded to ensure capacity to train, evaluate, monitor and manage the logistics of the RJ forums. Facilitators, regardless of gender, need to be well trained and sensitive to the dynamics of abuse.

While one RJ forum framework might exist there should be choices available to the woman. Victim concerns are paramount with the primary benefit of the process accruing to the victim and not the offender. (For example the offender does not receive special consideration in court for participating and that the focus of involving the offender is not reward but responsibility. In addition there is a need to recognize that women as offenders are different from men as offenders and have different needs in the restorative process.

The Domestic Violence Treatment Option in the Yukon may provide an example of what could work for women. In this program cases are screened and appropriate cases accepted. For example the man pleads guilty, sentencing is delayed and the offender receives treatment, the woman and her children are offered community programs, monitoring is applied, and sentencing happens at an appropriate date.

Confidentiality needs to be maintained, but cannot be a barrier to the service providers helping the woman. Good communication and collaboration between service providers is necessary to ensure the best possible service. Adequate resources are vital to success.

How do we Keep Children Safe?

Adequate financial support for women so that they can adequately provide for themselves and their children often means they do not have to return to the abusive situation. Children need to have a voice and be heard, including those between the ages of 16-18 years of age who often fall through the cracks. There is a need for age-group services for children who are victims and children who have witnessed violence. Children grow up seeing abuse, and children are being harmed. There is a need for monitoring after the abuse. Kids help lines don't come close to what the child needs. They need expanded services beyond transition houses - i.e. outreach services. There is a need for children to access services and a need for present programs to be made accessible for children - viable credited program (including for children to participate without parental consent).

Effective Justice System

<p>I want the abusers and those in the systems to understand to listen. Passionate Perspective</p>

Creating Processes That Do Not Re-victimize Women

RJ processes need to grow out of identified community needs. Fundamentally we need to start with shared values as the basis for this work, as opposed to starting with details of what it will look like, who will do it, etc. Appropriate structures and boundaries come when values and communication flow is clear. We need lots of dialogue and we also need to take action and be sure to red-flag situations (for example, abuse and power issues). While boundaries and structures are necessary, flexibility is also required and commitment to fluidity in partnerships to experiment gently and carefully.

It is possible (even likely) that abusers will use the same tactics in mediation and RJ that they used in the relationship. There is a strong need for offender accountability, training standards for facilitators and judges. There are so few services available in small communities - how can we ensure that women have access to services?

Safeguards might be maintained through having survivors monitor and evaluate services and programs. Women need to understand their options. Consequently support people, plain language information, and flexible services are needed to support options. Trained service providers using an interest-based process can talk with women about their needs and then pick or create process(es) that will meet each woman's individual needs.

RJ should never be mandated and is not appropriate when the victim does not want it. It should not take the place of criminal court in cases of violence against women. We need to exercise caution at times when someone is in a vulnerable state and is being asked to make a decision regarding RJ. The community needs should also be considered in making the decision to offer or not offer RJ options.

Women Offenders and RJ: What types of offenses do we want the system to divert to RJ?

The current system responds ineffectively to many women offenders. Women offenders are being criminalized because they commit offenses as a result of life circumstances and previous victimization. How might their voices be heard and how might we restore justice to these women?

In order to serve women, families, and communities well, services, programs and resources need to be available in rural communities. Women leaving prison need many supports - housing, employment, mental health services. They need security and to belong to communities. They need a system that, at the pre-charge stage, considers status, power imbalance and circumstances that lead to criminal activity.

Awareness and Education

It is really important that we all accept responsibility for creating safe and caring communities, to model for children how to treat each other and themselves and to model strength and independence for women.

Passionate Perspective

What is Restorative Justice (RJ)?

There continues to be much confusion as to what exactly constitutes RJ. One huge concern is that the operating definition changes according to programs and who is promoting it. There is great need to create a common understanding, language, and guiding principles. RJ should never be used as a sentencing tool in violence against women.

RJ is often separate from the court process (in violent situations) and is above and beyond the court process. RJ is about accountability not retribution - it avoids labeling people, is future oriented, intends to repair harm and not just respond to crime. Victims often want to participate for closure, and to look the offender in the eye; to deal with their feelings of guilt. RJ processes often involve the victim, offender and the community and it is possible to find meaningful solutions that address everyone's concerns. RJ is not limited to post-conviction or pre-sentence. RJ can be a long process that involves appropriate assessment. Participation in RJ must be voluntary.

I am passionate about women having safe environments to express their needs and desires. RJ holds the vision to help people build safe communities where people can be fully themselves.

Passionate Perspective

The Atlantic Accord

The following is a checklist of principles that need to be contained in and guide this accord:

- Restorative Justice/Alternate Dispute Resolution is not appropriate as a pre-sentence tool, for victims of violence.
- Participant (community, victim, offender) driven as opposed to needs of system
- The process should be healing for the whole community, victim and offender
- Timing of Alternative Dispute Resolution and Restorative Justice is crucial

Other Important Issues for consideration:

Restorative Justice Values:

Accountability

Repair harm done

Communication

Cooperation

Strengths of fundamental Atlantic Canada Communities and culture

An Atlantic Network

Real justice demands social justice.

Passionate Perspective

Regional Plan: Developing an Atlantic Network

Participants at the Atlantic Meeting imagined what would be happening if things were going really well. These are summarized as signs of success for an Atlantic Network.

Signs of Success for an Atlantic Network:

- Information and experiences shared across Atlantic provinces
- Government representatives involved and knowledgeable of feminist processes
- Support for community-based violence prevention and justice options
- Accountability mechanisms
- Cross-province consultations, including quick response to emerging issues
- Atlantic Canadians informed and educated in a consistent way, about woman abuse and justice options
- Recognize and support unique agendas, such as provincial and cultural differences, including resources and translated materials.
- Credible, visionary leadership group, with clear mandate
- Links with other groups doing similar work
- Active within each province, as well as Atlantic

Participants met in provincial groupings to discuss interest in an Atlantic Network and next steps for developing an Atlantic Network. The interest in an Atlantic Network was unanimous. The lists of what would be happening and ideas for next steps are provided in Appendix C, and summarized below as Steps in Developing an Atlantic Network.

Building bridges between communities and structures and social systems.

Passionate Perspective

Steps in Developing an Atlantic Network

Developmental

- Identify key representatives from each province
- Establish Terms of Reference including Mission, Values, Goals
- Establish common language to communicate about restorative justice and dispute resolution options and violence against women
- Offer training opportunities that includes feminist and gender-based analysis and common language and understandings

Home Base(s)

- Find a home for the Atlantic Network in each province and for the Atlantic Region
- Check with existing Atlantic Groups re: collaborating on this work; linking partnerships
- Establish communication and working mechanisms, identify strengths and needs and support provinces in being resources to each other

Communications Plan

- Establish communication links within and across the Atlantic provinces
- Develop information and education materials and mechanisms for support in communities and governments

Link with Federal Activities

- Technological link that could include checking if resources are available to support web site, and linking with federal sites
- RJ digest from CSC is an opportunity to put forth feminist analysis on these issues
- RJ week, Nov 16-23rd, to focus on education about RJ and violence against women
- Link with National Action Committee on Status of Women (NAC) especially for nationally lobbying

There was unanimous agreement to seek funding support for developing the Atlantic Network, recognizing that multiple funding sources is desirable, and recognizing in-kind contributions.

Possible funding sources include:

- Status of Women Canada
- Solicitor General

- Correctional Services Canada
- Law Reform Commission
- Indian and Northern Affairs
- Heritage Canada for translation.

Conclusions

Let's turn our passion into results for women.

Passionate Perspective

At the end of the Atlantic Meeting people were asked to evaluate and comment. The following are some of the closing comments from participants:

- To shift the perspective from the existing justice system to restorative justice and dispute resolution options is truly challenging. It is very complex; we must be aware and remember, not to forget the victim, and continue to be victim focused
- Words and meanings are very important and need to be defined by us; languages gets appropriated by and used in different ways by others and its meaning varies according to how it is used; we always need to clarify what we mean
- Communities need to be the driving force behind restorative justice; if we educate our communities and they take what they have learned, with support and assistance they will develop services to meet their needs
- We can work together on these options as an Atlantic Region and bring something unique and exciting to the work
- The process got me thinking about how we define problems and solutions in a way that brings together government and community based services; sometimes we seem to be on different pages but there is common ground
- There are depths to this work/issue that I need not feel compelled to understand and teach/educate about right away; all of the Ts need not be crossed for this work to begin in a safe way - and that is really ok

To help create safer, healthy environments in our 1st Nations communities, so our children can grow up violence free.

Passionate Perspective

An opportunity to restore balance, encourage taking responsibility.

Passionate Perspective

Belief in independence, happiness, fairness and being valued.

Passionate Perspective

Having a voice. Empowering people.

Passionate Perspective

Appendix A - Atlantic Meeting Participants

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Appendix B - Atlantic Meeting Agenda

Dispute Resolution and Violence Against Women Atlantic Meeting - May 8 to 10, 2003, Charlottetown, PEI University of Prince Edward Island Campus AGENDA

- Purpose:** To build a network across sectors and provinces for sharing information and influencing policy on dispute resolution and violence against women based on feminist analysis
- Pre - Meeting Material:** Compendium on Atlantic activities and research/policy work
- At-Meeting:** Resource Exchange - Display tables to share your resources (Please bring approximately 60 copies to share with others)
- Facilitators:** Bobbie Boland and Julie Devon Dodd
- Organizers:** Kirstin Lund and Christine Clements
- Funder:** Status of Women Canada

Thursday, May 8

11:00 Registration at the Wanda Wyatt Dining Room

Check-in for accommodations will take place at the front desk at the Blanchard Hall Residence. Participants may check-in to their room prior to Conference registration in the Dining Room.

12:00 Welcome Lunch - Gathering

1:00 Beginning / Passionate Perspectives on Our Work

- Welcome / Overview
- Getting to Know Each Other - Passionate Perspectives Activity

2:00 Activities in Atlantic Canada

One presenter from each province providing information about a project or activity and giving the context of Dispute Resolution and Violence Against Women in the province (15 minutes each), plus questions

3:15 Refreshment Break

3:45 Identifying What Is Most Important in our Work

Group process to address the question - What are the underlying needs, concerns, values, that guide our common work in Dispute Resolution and Violence Against Women?.

4:45 **Evaluation of Afternoon**
Evaluation Questions: What do you like about the process? What concerns do you have about the process? What do you like about the content? What concerns do you have about the content?

Thursday Evening

6:30 **Dinner** - Wanda Wyatt Dining Room

8:00 **Entertainment** (FIGHT Club - Female Improv Group Having Tea)

Friday May 9 - All Day

8:00 **Hot Breakfast Buffet** - Wanda Wyatt Dining Room

9:00 **Open Space to Address the Question - How can we ensure that dispute resolution processes meet the needs of women who are victims of violence?**

An opening session to set up the open space dialogue by:

- identifying discussion topics and discussion leaders
- assigning times and locations to discussion topics
- reviewing open space process and report writing

A day of dialogue in open space discussion groups. Computers available for reporting on group discussions.

Flexible Refreshment Breaks and Lunch (Refreshments available from 10:15 to 10:45, and 2:15 to 2:45, Lunch available from 11:45 to 1:15)

A report of the day will be available to all participants on Saturday morning that will include Topics of Discussion, Highlights of Key Discussion Points, Strategies Proposed, Other Important Comments.

4:00 **Open Space Debriefing and Closing**

Friday Evening

6:30 **Dinner** - To provide an opportunity for people to connect for dinner, group reservations will be made at a few local restaurants. Sign-up sheets will be located in the Dining Room Foyer.

Saturday Morning

8:00 **Hot Breakfast Buffet** - Wanda Wyatt Dining Room

- 9:00** **Report of Open Space Dialogue** available for pick-up
Welcome / Highlights of Open Space Discussions
- 9:15** **Atlantic Networking**
Small Group Discussions - Mixed Groups
If an Atlantic network existed and was working really well for everybody what would be happening? Is anything like that happening now?
- Highlights of Small Group Discussions**
- What do we know about Atlantic networks?** Listening to the experiences of participants about the benefits and challenges, pros and cons of Atlantic networks.
- 10:15** **Refreshment Break**
- 10:30** **Interests in Atlantic Network: Small Group Discussions**
Small groups, with representatives from each province, to talk about interest in an Atlantic Network, pros and cons, suggestions for next steps
- 11:15** **Interest in Atlantic Network: Group Reports / Next Steps**
To identify common areas for next steps, including facilitators summarizing a proposal for Atlantic Networking
- 11:45** **Evaluation of Meeting**
- 12:15** **Box lunch** - People can pick up a box lunch for the trip home, or to stay and visit with others

For those of you who are staying over Saturday night, there are many options for your entertainment whether it be sightseeing, shopping, taking in a movie or simply relaxing! We can also organize a group reservation for dinner if so desired. These details can be worked out at the gathering.

Appendix C - List of Ideas for an Atlantic Network

If things were going really well -What would be happening?

- Government involved and buy in - but how?
- Prevent duplication
- Provide support (anti-burnout)
- Strengthen advocacy work
- Share information and experience; newsletter, web site, chat room, constant resource exchange
- Accountability (a\watchdog)
- energetic and interested people involved
- facilitator; RJ knowledgeable, skilled, feminist
- meetings in different provinces - use technology, list serve
- Quick, immediate consultation - lessons learned
- Key reps to represent different interest groups (eg. culture, RJ, dispute resolution, (approximately 12 people))
- Create partnerships with Attorney Generals/Ministers and other key policy players (eg Atlantic Premiers. they listen to their counterparts Education to Atlantic Canadians; educate key reps of network)
- Advocacy among and within provinces
- shared values statement - How we are united (collaboration and communication. (First place to start))
- Recognize all different strengths (acknowledge when not safe to advocate)
- Walk the talk - use principles of DR in communication and collaboration
- Involve women in positions of power
- Recognize and support unique agenda, provincial and cultural
- Standards for providing services
- Consider national pilot project
- common package of materials for use by all
- credible - powerhouse
- embrace other groups with similar work
- Coordination (lists of contacts and resources etc)
- Terms of reference - mandate
- Feel connected /part of
- Keeping government available to communicate by powerful force
- Reach out across provinces/also within
- Staff person

Next Step Priority Highlights

Nova Scotia

- Funding from Status of Women Canada for Atlantic Coalition for ongoing work; also funding from Solicitor General
- Establish Terms of Reference
- Establish communication link

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Terms of Reference, Mission and Values
- Identify key reps from each province
- Find a home in province for this work -both within the provinces and Atlantic Region

Prince Edward Island

- Check with Existing Atlantic Groups re: collaboration on this work
- Offer training opportunities; women's analysis and common language
- Be resources to each other across provinces - strengths and needs

New Brunswick

- Community and Government buy-in
- Establish common language
- link partnerships

Federal Representatives

- This work is of interest to Solicitor General, Correctional Services Canada, Law Reform Commission, Status of Women Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs; these may be possible funding sources
- Multiple funders, multiple partners, in kind contributions are viewed positively
- Heritage Canada may be able to assist with translations
- Technological link, will check out if resources are available to support web site etc
- RJ digest from CSC is one opportunity to put forth the feminist analysis on these issues, also all participants will be placed on the mailing list
- Federal reps will make sure the women's voice gets talked about at CSC, Sol Gen's office; also will prepare an resource package of resources known to the federal government
- RJ week - Nov 16-23rd is another opportunity to put forth ideas, concerns etc
- NAC - forward any questions that this lobby group could assist with

