

The Regionally Looking for Peace symposium was held on April 10, 2008 at the Viking Community Hall in Viking, Alberta; a presentation of the Region 5 Family Violence Prevention Committee with financial support from the Community Partnership Enhancement Fund (CPEF). The purpose of the day was to provide cross ministry and agency training to professionals working with families that experience violence.

Over 100 participants attended the symposium, representing a number of different community agencies and ministries. These included:

- East Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority staff and board members
- Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) staff and board
- Health professionals,
- RCMP members
- AADAC staff
- Representatives from Alberta Justice and Alberta Education

While most participants were from Region 5, delegates came from as far away as Calgary and Red Deer to participate in the symposium.

Two corporate sponsors also participated in the day. Enbridge donated barbeque sauce for all the participants, and Reid Printing of Lloydminster donated a banner highlighting the symposium and the provincial family violence information line.

Val Campbell, Director of the Alberta Relationship Threat Assessment and Management Initiative (ARTAMI) spoke to delegates about intervention in situations of family violence. Her powerful presentation focused on risk factors associated with family violence and the need for professionals who investigate and intervene to ensure a thorough assessment. Ms. Campbell's presentation included information for police, children's services and medical professional on gathering evidence and interviewing victims of abuse.

Deborah Miller, senior council with Family Law spoke about the Edmonton Protection Order Program (EPOP). Her presentation featured information about the merits of emergency and Queen's Bench protection orders and the services offered by EPOP in urban and rural areas to support victims in taking legal steps to protect themselves.

Dr. Nigel Flook of Doctors Opposing Violence Everywhere (DOVE) gave a moving talk about the mechanisms of violence. He spoke of the issues behind violence for victims and offenders and gave information aimed at medical professionals to assist in assessing patients who may be victims of family violence.

Colin Fisher from Bowden Institution wrapped up the day. His animated presentation gave an overview of treatment services for offenders in the corrections system. Mr. Fisher highlighted the commitment of the federal system to combat family violence by providing inmates with programming geared at anger management, awareness of the cycle of violence, and healthy relationships.

MC Greg Stannard of the Viking RCMP rounded out the symposium by highlighting the fact that family violence affects every Albertan, and to effectively stop the cycle of violence, collaboration and community involvement are vital.

The Regionally Looking for Peace symposium is anticipated to be an annual event. The Region 5 Family Violence Prevention Committee is presently planning next year's symposium, and will partner with Flagstaff and Viking FCSS and Community Futures to bring Dr. Bruce Perry to Region 5 in October for an insightful conference focused on community response to family violence.

For more information about the symposium, or to obtain regional family violence information, contact Raylene Forseth, Regional Program Consultant at Raylene.Forseth@gov.ab.ca or by calling (780) 842-7557.

