

A FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICES
FOR
ABUSED WOMEN



This integrated model of service was developed
and tested by the
Community Framework Committee of Ottawa Carleton

September 1993

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This framework, the accompanying workbook and the integrated planning and evaluation process were developed in partnership with the following organizations through the Community Framework Committee, a working group of the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Coordinating Committee To End Violence Against Women.

- Ottawa Area Office, Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Regional Coordinating Committee To End Violence Against Women
- Gloucester Centre for Community Resources
- Nepean Community Resource Centre
- Harmony House
- Nelson House of Ottawa-Carleton
- Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Against Abuse
- Family Service Centre of Ottawa-Carleton
- Catholic Family Service of Ottawa-Carleton
- Interval House of Ottawa-Carleton
- Community Resource Centre of Goulbourn, Kanata and West Carleton
- Carlington Community and Health Services
- Pinecrest-Queensway Community Services
- Sexual Assault Network of Ottawa-Carleton
- Maison d'Amitié
- Comité Réseau
- Independent Living Centre of Ottawa-Carleton
- Aboriginal Women's Support Project
- Tungasuvvingat Inuit

IS THIS FRAMEWORK MANUAL FOR YOU?

This framework manual is written by women directly involved in the giving and receiving of services designed to help abused women. The knowledge gained from experience informs the shape and the content of this manual. It is designed to be a practical guide to anyone assuming responsibility for designing, coordinating, delivering or evaluating programs and services intended to help women live lives free from violence.

The **Framework for Services** and the accompanying **Workbook To Help You Use The Framework** together answer these three questions:

1. What do responsible and responsive services for abused women do?
2. How should they do it?
3. What activities can individuals, groups and networks do to make the Framework their own?

If you have asked yourself any of these questions then maybe this manual has some ideas you can use.

The following women committed their time and energy to do the creative thinking and the work that was required to build the framework package.

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Section A

THE COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK PROJECT

Getting Together to Build a Collective Vision

The first step in beginning to work with the framework involves understanding why and how twenty-eight women, all involved in providing frontline services, worked together for two years to identify what we have learned from our experience working with abused women.

All of us work within organizations which differ a great deal from one another. Among us we reach out and respond to women who reflect some of the diversity of our Canadian experience. The common bond we share is the desire to provide effective services to women who seek help to end the violence in their lives and in the lives of their children.

In Section A we describe what we did to build our similar desire into a clear vision and a comprehensive framework for services for abused women and their children.

THE COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK PROJECT

Introduction

In the last ten years the network of services for abused women has developed significantly. This is due to the efforts of grassroots women's organizations, heightened public awareness of the issue, enhanced identification procedures, more stable funding resources and a greatly expanded body of knowledge about causes of violence against women by partners and what needs to be done to break the cycle of violence for present victims and future generations. Since 1984 the Ministry of Community and Social Services has been an active partner in helping to make these advances a reality.

In Ottawa-Carleton the network of services for abused women is well developed. The strength of this network is best reflected through the ongoing work of the Regional Committee To End Violence Against Women. Attendance at the monthly meetings averages between fifty and sixty participants. Survivors, service providers, funders, policy developers and researchers representing a diverse range of interests share information, identify issues and advocate for social change through this coalition structure. The Coordinating Committee has maintained a forward looking agenda. The need to develop a framework for services for abused women was first talked about in one of the committees of the Coordinating Committee.

In the Spring of 1989 the Ottawa Area Office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the service providers who have contracts with MCSS to provide counselling, shelter and support services to women victims of partner abuse recognized the need to work together to articulate in a more formal way a general framework for service delivery. All agreed that they wanted a framework that outlined in concrete, measureable terms the beliefs, the elements and the process

that is required to make a "good" service for abused women and their children and a service that supports the staff and volunteers who have accepted the responsibility for delivering those services.

Limited funding and a significant increase in the demand for services requires that decisions that are made ensure maximum availability, accessibility and effectiveness of services. There also must be a means for ensuring that the services that are developed for abused women remain grounded in and reflect the reality of the women's experiences. Development of a practical, collectively developed framework that could be used by funders, service providers and community planning and coordinating bodies to guide decision making was seen as the best way to ensure that this happens in our community.

With some funding from the Ottawa Area Office of MCSS and considerable enthusiasm on the part of the service providers funded by MCSS the Community Framework Project was born.

The Process for Developing the Framework

From the beginning of the project as much thought has been given to the process as to the end product. Because of this the working group members are confident that this framework truly reflects the lessons learned from the survivors and those service providers most directly involved in helping them.

The basic framework was developed and tested in year one of the project. At the end of the year our evaluation indicated that two tasks remained if the goal of getting the framework used in our community was to be achieved. Thus a second year workplan was done and the working committee expanded to include workers from more recently funded services and in a position to participate in year two. All of the learnings gained through year two were used to revise and improve the usefulness of this framework manual.

Over the two years twenty- six women and the consultant co-facilitators worked on this framework. All of the women are actively involved in the development, coordination, delivery and evaluation of

services for abused women in the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. The program supervisor responsible for funding services for abused women in Ottawa-Carleton also was a member of the committee.

The working group meetings were set in advance, time frames adhered to and each member of the committee accepted responsibility for being at each meeting and for carrying out tasks that had to be done to try out parts of the framework as we went along. The meetings were planned so that the process of building continually moved forward and so that the members had fun while learning and working together.

The consultant cofacilitators were responsible for planning the process for the working meetings, designing work sheets for gathering information efficiently, collating and organizing the information into useful formats and then writing and updating the framework. The working group members provided the content and were responsible for reviewing, advising changes and approving final formats and content for the framework manual.

The responsibility for chairing the meetings and for administering the funds rested with one of the community based programs providing services to abused women.

Requests for information on the framework by others outside of Ottawa-Carleton resulted in a Friends of the Committee List. Individuals and organizations wanting information received what was available and were asked to contribute their ideas and knowledge to the "collective pot" of information. Many from across Canada did just that. All feedback on language, concepts and ways to use the framework were recorded and then considered by the working committee. Now the framework includes the experience and knowledge of many more women than just those living and working in Ottawa-Carleton.

The development and testing of the framework took one year. A second year became necessary when the committee realized that two major tasks remained to be done. The first was to do the work we needed to do to better understand evaluation as a tool for learning rather than a tool of judgement. We needed to do this so we could develop and integrate the evaluation segment of the framework in the same practical way as the other aspects of the framework had been done. The other task for the

second year was to make sure the framework got used in our organizations and did not become simply "another manual on the shelf of manuals".

The learnings from the second year resulted in some significant changes to the framework manual as it was originally written. Our most important learnings in year two were about how to use the framework to make it work for us to support and guide our work and about how to build better accountability measures into our day-to-day workplans. Those learnings have been incorporated into this manual.

Building for agreement not uniformity

The working principles which were used to help such diverse interests come to agreement were:

- to build on our strengths and our similarities
- to value our differences and find the underlying common factors rather than forcing some to change positions for the sake of the group
- to talk about different ways of reaching a goal instead of right and wrong ways of doing things

Practicing these principles led to rich discussion and an expanded view of what is possible. Although diversity was valued these principles helped us be ever more united and confident about the validity of the core framework.

And finally.....

This manual is designed to be a living document...one to be used. The three ring binder format has been used to encourage continual refining and adaptation as individuals and organizations become better at articulating what we do, how we do it and what needs to be done to help us do our job better. In future each person's manual should look just a little different from any other. Hopefully the core values and the basic framework will remain intact and provide the vision that unites us in our work to end violence against women and their children.

Notes

Section B

THE FRAMEWORK **A Model For Services For Abused Women**

The framework is women's collective learning put into a format that can be used by any organization or community to ensure that the services they deliver for women who are abused are doing what women say work well for them. The framework manual states in clear language what work needs to be done and outlines a process for doing it.

The framework includes:

- **a statement defining the problem** of abuse of women by their partners.
- **a vision statement** for the service delivery system.
- **a statement of the basic beliefs** which ground the framework.
- **the framework wheel:** a diagram which identifies the six required elements for a comprehensive service delivery system and the values that shape and direct how each of these areas of activity are to be carried out.
- **goals** for each of the six elements of the framework
- **ideas for reaching the goals** in ways that put the values into action

The framework promotes a way of working that allows creativity, evolution and maximum choice but also articulates clear goals and a set of guiding principles for the development, implementation and evaluation of services for abused women.

THE FRAMEWORK

A Model For Services For Abused Women

Statement of the Problem

Abuse against women by male/female partners or ex-partners is a complex issue. It is accepted that there are several discrete but related forms of victimization within the family including: wife assault, rape, child abuse, sexual abuse of children, lesbian battering and abuse of the elderly, disabled and infirm. The distinctive thread running through these categories is that abuse occurs between intimates; people who know, depend upon and have deep emotional ties to one another. Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse are the forms of violence used to threaten the integrity, safety and well-being of victims. Abuse against women and children is a social problem that transcends all class, cultural and ethnic boundaries.

Traditionally the family unit has been viewed as a nurturing, protective haven. In the last twenty years this perception has been shattered. In its place the structure of the family and the structure of the traditional intimate relationship have been identified as contexts that support and even contribute to the belief that it is acceptable to use force to maintain the status quo. The attitudes that support the belief that the head of the household should have power over those living with him is being increasingly challenged in the public forum.

In Canada, the historical context within which violence in the family has developed is that of male domination within and outside the family. Patriarchal institutions and social structures accept that relationships shaped by power differentials (dominant/dominated) are essential to maintain social order. Relationships based on an imbalance of power appear to account for violence against women by men, children by adults, of elderly persons by younger people, minority groups by the majority and of one class by another and so on.

Violence in intimate relationships and in the family is the exercise of power to control through fear the thoughts and actions of the less powerful individuals - primarily women and children. Thus the source of the problem lies within the person who abuses and the traditions and institutions that maintain abuse.

Efforts to date to assist women survivors of abuse have of necessity focussed primarily on crisis responses. Holding perpetrators (men) accountable for their abusive behaviours and developing emergency shelter and crisis protection and support services for survivors has consumed most of the human and financial resources. The most significant learning from all of our experience is that providing services to survivors will never be enough to end the violence.

A fundamental social change must take place in Canadian society that makes abusing women and children unacceptable behaviour in practice as well as theory. All services which are funded to help women and children pick up the pieces of their battered lives must as part of their work be actively involved in this process of social change aimed at devising and implementing systemic remedies.

Vision Statement

Services for abused women are committed to helping women and their children live lives free of violence.

They do this through:

1. **Direct Service:**
providing women survivors with safe environments in which information, access to practical resources, time and support are available to all women requesting help
2. **Social Action:**
participating in activities to change the societal structures and practices which contribute to violence against women and children

Introduction to basic beliefs:

- The list of basic beliefs on the next page shape and direct our work as we develop and deliver services for abused women.
- The basic belief statements link to the values represented in the outer rim of the framework wheel.
- Re-examining, reaffirming and revising these belief statements is an essential and ongoing part of all our work. Several activities in this workbook have been specifically designed to assist with this process:
 - Activity 2:** Building a Shared Belief System
 - Activity 3:** Understanding the Framework Values
 - Activity 4:** Linking Beliefs and Values
- Different groups will place different emphasis on each of the belief statements and may add new ones. The important thing is for our organizations, committees and work groups to have the discussion and reach a shared understanding about the beliefs and values which will direct our work with women who are abused.

Basic Beliefs
Underlying Services for Abused Women

- It is a basic human right for all individuals to live their lives in a non-violent environment.
- Understanding and naming the issues of power and control are fundamental to the task of ending violence against women and children.
- The service network must address the issue of violence at both the individual and the systemic level in order to create a non-violent community.
- Psychological, emotional, sexual, physical and financial abuse against women are major social and health problems. Women should have access to appropriate help for all forms of abuse.
- Violence against women is not a private family matter but is a criminal offence which demands that perpetrators, not their victims, be held responsible for the violence.
- Women who have additional needs due to age, language, culture, disability, poverty, geographical location or lesbian lifestyle require services that are sensitive to and reflect these needs.
- Children who witness their mothers being abused are victims of abuse. Advocating for and ensuring the development of appropriate services for these children is essential to meeting their needs and the needs of their mothers.
- Women can take control of the personal aspects of their lives provided they are given true choices, accurate information and the opportunity to be equal partners in all aspects of society.
- A co-ordinated comprehensive community approach to service delivery is essential to create the choices and to meet the many needs of abused women and children.
- Ending violence in the family is everybody's responsibility. Governments, business, voluntary groups, institutions and service providers must be involved in public education and activities which contribute to social change.
- Women survivors of violence are essential partners in the work of service development, public education and social change.
- Services which are helpful to abused women and their children must be accountable to the women who use the service and the staff, the volunteers and the community.

Introduction to the framework wheel:

- The wheel on the next page represents in diagram form the different values and elements of service which make up the framework.
- The outer rim of the wheel describes the values that need to be reflected in the behaviors, attitudes and structures of all parts of the service delivery system including
 - individual practice
 - agency practices
 - community network development
- The inner segments of the wheel identify the six elements or categories of activity which together make up a comprehensive approach for services for abused women.
- The framework wheel has proven to be a very useful visual tool for introducing and working with the material in the framework manual. Activities which use the wheel can be found in the Workbook section and include:
 - Activity 4:** Linking Beliefs and Values
 - Activity 5:** Understanding the Framework Wheel
 - Activity 6:** Setting Priorities

The Framework Wheel



Introduction to the Goals of Service Delivery:

- The following section outlines the goals for each of the six elements of service shown on the inside of the framework wheel. To develop the goal statements our committee entered into a vigorous process. Our aim was to translate what we know from experience we should be doing into goal statements.

- The goal statements are designed to be:
 - clearly stated
 - specific
 - achievable
 - measureable (using qualitative or quantitative information)

- Having common goals which transcend organization barriers and which identify exactly what all of us are working towards forms the common bond upon which we can build. The ways we choose to reach the goals reflect the uniqueness of each program and organization mandate.

- When we use the word personnel we intend that paid staff, volunteers and board members all be included.

GOALS
of Service Delivery for Abused Women

The following section outlines the goals for each of the six elements of service delivery shown on the framework wheel.

Direct Service

1. To deliver services which contribute to keeping women and their children safe.
2. To provide all of the information required that allows women to:
 - receive validation and emotional support
 - develop realistic plans for their own futures
 - receive the practical and emotional assistance required to implement their plans
 - gain access to the practical resources they require to help themselves and their children break free from the effects of past and present abuse
3. To advocate for and create as needed the required supports for the children affected by abuse in the family.
4. To value and build in opportunities in all aspects of service planning and delivery for peer support and self-help for:
 - survivors
 - volunteers
 - paid staff
5. To maintain a system of service delivery which is accessible to all women living in a specific community.
6. To maintain a service delivery strategy that values and promotes both experiential and professional knowledge in a balanced and respectful way.

Co-ordination of Service and Policy

1. To build strong reciprocal links with other community services and co-ordinating bodies working on the issue of violence in the family so as to continually promote and develop a complementary network of choices for women survivors of violence.
2. To ensure the co-ordination, consistency and compatibility of policies and practices within the agency and all of its programs.

Training and Development

1. To ensure an ongoing education process for board members, volunteers and paid staff which:
 - critically examines personal values that contribute to violence against women
 - regularly updates the skills and knowledge base
 - supports creativity and flexibility in program design and implementation
 - keeps womens' experiences central to the process
 - values and promotes both experiential and theoretical knowledge

Community Education

1. To design and implement initiatives that place the issue of ending abuse in the family on everyone's agenda
2. To include a gender and power analysis of abuse in all community education initiatives
3. To involve all members of the community in the process of social change through education.

Advocacy

1. To advocate with and for survivors of abuse in order to:
 - remove barriers which are preventing their escape from abusive relationships
 - change systems which do not serve the needs of women survivors of violence and their children
 - identify and strengthen the systems which do serve the needs of women survivors of violence and their children
 - to insist upon offenders accepting responsibility for their violence

Evaluation

1. To ensure that all agency services remain responsive, supportive and accountable to women survivors of violence and their children.
2. To ensure that the organization is supportive and accountable to its staff and volunteers.
3. To ensure that the agency involves and represents the community in which it operates.

Introduction to Ideas for Meeting the Goals:

- In this section we identify activities that help us reach our goals in a way that puts the values of the framework into practice.
- The intent is not that these be seen as checklists or that the ideas listed here form an exhaustive list. Instead these are ideas that we have used and that we hope will continue to inspire us to create more rather than fewer activities that ensures we practice what we preach.
- Having a wide range of ideas available meant that each of us was able to find at least a couple which we could incorporate into our workplans to make what we already do better reflect the values of the framework.

**IDEAS
For Meeting the Goals**

Direct Service

Goal 1: To deliver services which contribute to keeping women and their children safe.

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. The physical and emotional safety of women and their children are stated priorities in every agency program and initiative.
2. We have a written procedure to ensure that crisis calls are responded to promptly, consistently and compassionately.
3. We have a procedure to deal with after hour calls.
4. We ensure that confidentiality is respected through:
 - written policy
 - inservice training of all staff, volunteers and board members
5. Our service atmosphere is accepting and woman positive:
 - women counsellors are available
 - a choice of counsellor is possible
 - the physical setting is welcoming to women and their children
 - the reception area offers privacy
6. All services for violent partners/ex partners include a plan for protecting the safety of women and children.
7. Women are helped to take action to keep themselves and their children safe.
8. Our services remain open and accessible regardless of women's choices and decisions.

Direct Service

- Goal 2.** To provide all of the information required that allows women to:
- receive validation and emotional support
 - develop realistic plans for their own futures
 - receive the practical and emotional assistance required to implement their plans
 - gain access to the resources they require to help themselves and their children break free from the effects of past and present abuse

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. On first contact every woman is given an information package.
2. Our information packages are systematically reviewed to ensure that they
 - are accurate
 - provide essential but not overwhelming information
 - give consistent positive messages to women
 - are written in plain, clear language
 - are available in alternative forms
3. We help women find and coordinate the resources they and their children require to ensure adequate safety, shelter, food, money and emotional support.
4. We support women to make and implement their own choices after they have received all the information they need.
5. We help women coordinate their counselling needs for the past and present abuse in their lives.

Direct Service

Goal 3: To advocate for and create as needed the required supports for the children affected by abuse in the family.

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. Our intake process includes an assessment of the children's needs.
2. Intervention and follow-up plans for a woman include helping her identify what supports she needs to care for her children.
3. Mothers remain involved in all planning for their children to the level they determine is possible.
4. Gaps in service for children are identified and addressed by the agency in partnership with other agencies.
5. Survivors are involved in the planning of services for children
6. The agency contributes to the ongoing improvement of services for children of abused women.
7. All our staff and volunteers receive regular training on relevant child welfare legislation and services.
8. A protocol supportive to mothers exists for reporting child abuse.
9. Our service works with local schools to help educators better support children who have witnessed violence.

Direct Service

- Goal 4: To value and build in opportunities in all aspects of service planning and delivery for peer support and self-help for:**
- survivors
 - volunteers
 - paid staff

Ideas for meeting the goals:

1. Support groups are an integral part of our service delivery.
2. Adequate financial and human resources are committed to self-help and mutual aid.
3. Staff and volunteers have time scheduled for networking, information sharing and problem solving.
4. The working atmosphere encourages problem solving and cooperative conflict resolution.
5. Creative and generous personnel policies exist to acknowledge the inherent stress of working on the issue of violence against women.
6. Individual plans for self care and personal development are part of the annual performance review.

Direct Service

Goal 5: To maintain a system of service delivery which is accessible to all women living in a specific/geographic community.

Ideas for meeting the goals:

1. Accessibility is defined from the individual woman's perspective.
2. Increasing accessibility is an ongoing priority for the agency and is part of:
 - our agency policy
 - a written agency strategy
 - our allocation of human/financial resources
 - our evaluation strategy
3. Money for childcare and transportation is always available to women who are using our service.
4. Appropriate and sensitive assistance is provided to women who are:
 - older
 - adolescent
 - disabled
 - poor
 - ethnically, culturally a minority
 - isolated
 - lesbian
 - addicted
5. The diversity of the community is reflected in the make-up of our board, staff, volunteers and clients. This diversity is also reflected in our agency materials and office environment.
6. Outreach initiatives include funds and time to reach the groups of women in the community who are not using or are underrepresented in our service.
7. Literacy issues are considered in all aspects of program and information development. We use plain language and avoid jargon in all our materials. Information is available on tape.
8. Our agency is actively working to complement and support other services which abused women use to meet their special needs. eg. addiction services, culturally specific services.

Direct Service

Goal 6. To maintain a service delivery strategy that values and promotes both experiential and professional knowledge in a balanced and respectful way.

Ideas for meeting the goals:

1. Our hiring practices reflect equal respect for both experiential and academic learning.
2. Survivors/previous consumers are encouraged to be involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services through involvement in:
 - policy development
 - committee and advisory work
 - developing proposals for funding
3. Both experiential and academic qualifications are financially rewarded.
4. Volunteers and paid staff are regularly acknowledged for the work they do.
5. Our hiring practices are reviewed regularly to ensure that the people most suited to the work of the agency are recruited and hired.
6. Volunteers are provided similar opportunities as paid staff to share in the "perks" which arise from time to time. Some of the more common ones might be:
 - participating in out-of-town conferences (expenses paid)
 - participating as one of the agency representatives on coordinating and planning bodies in the community
7. Volunteers/survivors are not exploited for the benefit of the agency. They are provided opportunities for skills training, support and supervision and performance review.

**Coordination of
Service and Policy**

Goal 1: To build strong reciprocal links with other community services and coordinating bodies working on the issue of violence in the family so as to continually promote and develop a complementary network of options for women survivors of violence.

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. Our agency is an active member of a community based coordinating committee on violence against women.
2. Our agency actively seeks opportunities to address gaps and widen choice in service alternatives.
3. The agency shares information openly to contribute towards the collective knowledge about issues of violence.
4. Our agency has a written admission policy and outline of services which is distributed regularly to other agencies in the community.
5. Our agency regularly seeks feedback from other agencies on the effectiveness of our services in meeting women's needs.
6. The agency's networking activities reflect the diversity of the targetted community.
7. Multidisciplinary approaches are valued as demonstrated by:
 - our training strategies
 - the service plans developed with women
 - protocols
8. When developing new projects our organization always asks the following questions:
 - is there someone else in the community who could/should do this?
 - should we do this project with another organization?

Coordination

Goal 2: To ensure the co-ordination, consistency and compatibility of policies and practices within the agency and all of its programs.

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. All policies and procedures are written, readily available and known and understood by all personnel.
2. Policies and procedures are regularly monitored for consistency and compatability with each other.
3. Users of service, referring agencies and all agency personnel are encouraged to contribute to keeping policies and procedures relevant and supportive of the work to be done.

Training and Development

Goal: To ensure an ongoing education process for board members, volunteers and paid staff which:

- **critically examines personal values that contribute to violence against women**
- **regularly updates the skills and knowledge base**
- **supports creativity and flexibility in program design and implementation**
- **keeps womens' experiences central to the process**
- **values and promotes both experiential and theoretical knowledge**

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. Ongoing training is a priority for our agency as demonstrated by:
 - established policy
 - written training strategy
 - allocation of funding resources and staff time
2. Ongoing awareness and sensitivity training is expected of board members, volunteers and paid staff.
3. A comprehensive orientation training is provided for all board, staff and volunteer personnel
4. Survivors/consumers are considered key educators of all personnel and are involved in the planning of training.
5. A gender and power analysis of violence is part of all training.
6. Training sessions and strategies are regularly assessed for
 - effectiveness
 - relevance
 - comprehensiveness
7. Training resources are shared with other agencies whenever possible and appropriate.
8. Regular performance reviews are provided for paid staff, volunteers and board members using a process which is :
 - collaborative
 - builds on strengths
 - encourages personal learning plans

Community Education

Goal 1: To design and implement initiatives that place the issue of ending abuse in the family on everyone's agenda

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. Educating the community is a priority for our agency as demonstrated by:
 - agency policy
 - a written community education strategy is in place and reviewed annually
 - the allocation of human and financial resources
2. A community education strategy exists which reflects the special needs of the designated community:
 - cultural differences
 - accessibility needs
3. Volunteer involvement in educating the community is encouraged and valued.
4. The agency links and builds on provincial and federal education initiatives.
5. Community education material is provided in a variety of ways to increase accessibility.

Community Education

Goal 2: To include a gender and power analysis of abuse in all community education initiatives

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. Volunteers and staff doing community education accept and promote a gender and power analysis of the violence issue.
2. All presenters are screened, trained, supervised and supported.
3. Staff time is devoted to supervision and support for those involved in the community education program.
4. Community education tools and presentations use a participatory, learner-centred approach to encourage taking personal responsibility for ending abuse and violence against women and children.

Goal 3: To involve all members of the community in the process of social change through education.

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. Using the community development process we are expanding the circle of people involved in community education and social change.
2. Practical steps are being taken to involve men in the process of education and social change.
3. The agency is involved in keeping the issue of violence on the political agenda
4. The agency contributes to challenging social systems which are not supportive of women's equality.
5. Education materials and presentations include practical 'how to's'.
6. The agency encourages community involvement in the annual November 'Family Violence Prevention Month'.

Advocacy

- Goal:** To advocate with and for survivors of abuse in order to:
- **remove barriers which are preventing their escape from abusive relationships**
 - **change systems which do not serve the needs of women survivors of violence and their children**
 - **identify and strengthen the systems which do serve the needs of women survivors of violence and their children**
 - **to insist upon offenders accepting responsibility for their violence**

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. Advocacy is a priority for our agency as demonstrated by:
 - our agency policy
 - our implementation and evaluation strategy which is reviewed annually
 - allocation of human and financial resources
2. Survivors are integral to agency advocacy initiatives
3. All offenders are held responsible for their violence
4. Staff and volunteers are supported to participate in and organize community advocacy initiatives.
5. Positive social change advances are acknowledged and celebrated
6. Agency personnel are supported to constructively confront issues, problems, and power imbalances within the agency.

Evaluation

Goal 1: To ensure that all agency services remain responsive, supportive and accountable to women survivors of violence and their children.

Ideas for meeting the goal:

1. We have a system to maximize women's safety.
2. Survivors are involved in
 - policy development
 - committee and advisory work
 - program planning
3. We involve women in the decision making about their children
4. Women help develop the services for children
5. A system is in place to ensure that offenders are held accountable for their actions.
6. Feedback is sought from consumers on the effectiveness of our services.

Evaluation

Goal 2: To ensure that the organization is supportive and accountable to its staff and volunteers.

Ideas for meeting the goals:

1. Realistic caseload and workload limits are in place and personnel are supported to respect these limits.
2. Regular performance reviews are completed for all staff and volunteers.
3. Workers are encouraged and supported to develop a personal care plan to balance their work, family and social lives.
4. Group successes are celebrated and individual efforts acknowledged.
5. Conflict is resolved through an open process using problem solving methods.
6. Information and administrative systems are designed to be of most use to those who use them. Users contribute regularly to the evaluation of effectiveness.
7. Financial information is kept in a way that is useful, accessible and up to date
8. Systems are in place for meaningful exchanges of information between board, staff, volunteers and consumers.
9. Staff and volunteers have input into and feedback from all agency evaluations.

Evaluation

Goal 3: To ensure that the agency involves and represents the community in which it operates.

Ideas for meeting the goals:

1. Our organization is proactive in recruiting members of minority groups in our community to work as staff, board members and volunteers.
2. Partnerships involving our agency and other community groups are used for prevention initiatives, public education events and encouraging contributions.
3. Community feedback is sought regularly on the appropriateness and effectiveness of services.
4. We have a system to get information out to diverse groups in our community.

Section C

THE WORKBOOK

We believe that process is just as important as content if we want to achieve the goal of stopping violence against women and their children. This workbook outlines some practical ideas and activities we can use to put the framework material into practice.

The workbook includes:

- **ideas for use** of the framework material
- **activities** developed for groups
- **worksheets** to support the activities

There is no "right" way to use the framework material. Some groups worked through it section by section. Others jumped into the middle and focussed on one particular element as a planning tool. The one activity we did find to be consistently useful as a beginning in all settings was discussion about the basic beliefs.

Our committee has used all the activities with staff, board members, volunteers and other community based groups. We encourage you to try them, adapt them, create new ones. The challenge is not to just talk about the material but to use it!

The workbook outlines a process for building services which practice the philosophy of empowerment which we all promote.

What's in the Workbook

Introducing the Framework to Your Agency

- Setting the scene
- Building the framework wheel
- Building a shared belief system
- Challenges and rewards of using the framework

Ideas for Using the Framework

1. Team Building with Board, Staff and Volunteers
2. Organizational Planning
3. Setting Priorities
4. Orientation of New Staff
5. Preparation of Individual Workplans
6. Proposal Writing
7. Developing Needs Assessments
8. Designing for Effective Committee Work
9. Building Community Networks
10. Strengthening Accountability to Staff and Volunteers

Evaluation and the Framework

- Introduction
- Evaluation: a way to hold ourselves accountable
- Evaluation questions
- Evaluation used for learning rather than for passing judgment
- Evaluation as part of the job
- Preparing ourselves for evaluation

Activities to help you use the Framework

1. Introducing the Framework to Your Agency
2. Building a Shared Belief System
3. Understanding the Framework Values
4. Linking Beliefs and Values

5. Understanding the Framework Wheel
6. Reviewing Service Goals Using the Framework
7. Setting Priorities Using the Framework
8. Designing a Needs Assessment
9. Evaluating Accountability to Staff and Volunteers
10. Strengthening Co-ordination of Services
11. Determining Uses/Misuses of the Framework

Worksheets

1. Log Book worksheet
2. Reviewing Goals worksheet
3. Linking Our Values and Beliefs worksheet
4. Accountability worksheet
5. Co-ordination of Services worksheet
6. Icebreakers and Warm-ups
7. Writing Measureable Goals and Objectives
8. Support Groups for Abused Women: A Discussion Paper
9. Participants Review Guide: Support Groups for Abused Women
10. Evaluation Guide for Group Facilitators
11. Basic Beliefs Underlying Services in a Multi-Service Centre

Introducing the Framework in Your Agency

The framework can be very useful in a wide variety of agencies. Some of our committee members worked in organizations whose services were only for abused women and their children. Others worked in agencies which provided a range of social services to the community, with services for abused women representing just one piece of the delivery system. In all situations we found ways to make the material in the framework relevant and applicable to our work.

- **Setting the Scene**

From experience we have found that in first introducing the framework to a new group there are some basic questions and key points which need to be stressed. The following section provides some of this information. We also suggest that you read through Section A and Section B in preparation for the introduction. As a handout you could give everyone a copy of the wheel and the first page of Section B which outlines the key parts of the framework.

1. What is the framework?

- The framework is a model which provides content and direction to our services for abused women and their children.
- It is built on our collective learnings as front-line service providers of what works in services for abused women.
- It is a model which is grounded in the realities of women's lives. It represents the lessons learned from survivors of what worked for them and translates these learnings into practical tools and activities for organizing and integrating our services.
- The framework is built around the principle and practice of sharing power using the needs and knowledge of abused women as the focal point. It is not an "expert" or "top-down" model.
- While encouraging creativity, choice and flexibility in service development, the framework also outlines the fundamental goals and guiding principles which should remain constant in all our work.

2. How was the framework developed?

- The framework was developed over two years by a group of 26 women in Ottawa-Carleton, all of whom are actively involved in the development, co-ordination, delivery and evaluation of services for abused women and their children.

3. What can the framework offer our agency?

- The framework provides a useful model for the development, co-ordination, delivery and evaluation of services for abused women and their children.
- The framework can help us look at what we are already doing, celebrate our successes and further strengthen our services so that they remain responsive and accountable to the women we serve.
- The framework provides practical ideas, activities and worksheets which can be adapted to suit each organization's needs.

• **Building the Framework Wheel**

We have found that the best way to familiarize people with the material in the framework manual is to use the framework wheel. This simple diagram illustrates the key values and elements of service delivery for abused women in a very clear format without overwhelming people with too much information.

Activity 1: Introducing the Framework to Your Agency provides a group activity to illustrate how the wheel can be used for this purpose.

• **Building a Shared Belief System**

It is essential for all work on the framework to begin with a discussion around the values and beliefs which guide our practice. We can never assume that a group shares a common understanding of these values until this discussion takes place. All staff, volunteers and board members in our agencies needed to have this discussion in order for us to build a commitment to the framework principles and to its use in our services.

Activities which facilitated this discussion within our agencies were:

- Activity 2. Building a Shared Belief System**
- Activity 3. Understanding the Framework Values**
- Activity 4. Linking Beliefs and Values**

- **Challenges and Rewards of Using the Framework**

We can't end this section without adding a few cautionary words about possible misuses of the framework. While we believe it is a wonderful tool in so many ways, all of us on the framework committee realized that it could be used negatively as well as positively in our work.

Challenges

To identify some of the concerns about the framework we used:

Activity 11: Determining Uses and Abuses of the Framework

with both our committee members and with a group of funders.

You might want to use a similar process at some point in your discussion of the framework to find out if your group has any real but hidden concerns about the material

Some of the of the issues which came from this exercise included :

- unrealistic expectations might be set up by the framework material and then funding denied, cut back or not increased if agencies did not meet them.
- organizations may refuse to buy into the framework at all because of the higher expectations it creates for service delivery.
- organizations may feel that they have to be everything for everybody and expect to be funded accordingly.
- the focus on the use of volunteers in the framework may be misinterpreted as a way to provide a less expensive service by cutting down on the use of paid staff.
- the framework may be forced on existing programs without the necessary support and resources to implement it.
- the framework may be used unfairly as a comparative grid for quite different services at quite different stages of development.
- the framework may be seen as a quantitative tool leading to a checklist mentality which ignores the vital importance of process.

These are all valid concerns which need to be discussed openly both with your own staff and with your funders.

Rewards

To end on a positive note and as a balance to the worst case scenarios listed above, our group and the funders we worked with identified the following very real rewards we got from using the framework:

- the framework allows everyone to recognize and affirm the real diversity and scope of what is being done by services.
- it sets some common standards against which service delivery can be measured.
- it emphasizes the importance of the whole range of elements which make up good service delivery - direct service, training, co-ordination, advocacy, community education, evaluation - and the need to provide resources for them.
- it provides clear statements of goals and objectives and how they are to be achieved.
- it provides a consistent framework for philosophy of practice.
- it allows for a partnership between funders and programs
- it stimulates thinking on ways that networks may interact and share resources.

The list will continue to grow for you as you use the material.

Ideas for Using the Framework

Over the two years of the framework project, committee members have used the framework material in a variety of creative ways. The following section outlines some of these uses. Our hope is that you will develop and adapt these ideas and activities to fit the needs of your organization in order to make the framework materials truly your own.

1. Team Building with Board, Staff and Volunteers

Many of us work in settings where we assume that we all share the same beliefs about women, the violence in our lives and what needs to

be done to end it. Very little time is given to stating just what these beliefs are and building consensus around them and yet this is an essential building block of team development.

The following activities have been designed to help groups discuss and build consensus around a shared value and belief system:

- **Activity 2: Building a Shared Belief System**
- **Activity 3: Understanding the Framework Values**
- **Activity 4: Linking Beliefs and Values**

We have used these activities with many different organizations, with large groups and small, with board, staff and volunteers and have found they work well in helping people establish a clearer vision of the direction of their work.

- **Activity 5: Understanding the Framework Wheel**
- **Activity 6: Reviewing Service Goals Using the Framework**

These activities are useful for team building. As well as introducing the key elements of the framework and making the link between the group's work and the services required, they can provide the group with an overview of all the work their organization is doing. The focus on successes is deliberate. Too often we become totally problem focussed which, while often necessary, can eventually lead to discouragement and burnout. We need to make time to step back and look at the whole range of work activities we are doing together and identify what we do well. We have found both of these activities work well to energize us and reinforce our commitment and enthusiasm for our work.

2. Organizational Planning

Finding the time to develop yearly organizational workplans and to establish our short and long term goals has been a struggle for many organizations. We never seem to have enough resources to meet the immediate needs of the women and children we serve let alone find time for planning. While most of us pay lip service to the importance of having a good planning process in place, in many cases planning is not done in a consistent and systematic manner. However, the reality

in these days of limited resources and funders' demands for increased accountability is that we are going to have to produce clear short and long term plans. We believe that the material in the framework can be used to help to make this task a lot easier.

Two tools to help you in the planning process are

- **Activity 6: Reviewing Service Goals Using the Framework**
- **Worksheet 2: Reviewing Goals Worksheet**

The time required for working through this activity will vary considerably with each organization. In our testing of the material we found that organizations which were quite new and had not established clear goals and objectives needed to devote a lot of time to this activity. Using part of each staff meeting to discuss a different element of service worked well.

The goal worksheet can be adapted in many ways. It can be used as a handout for each person or small group to complete in relation to a particular element of service. The main headings can be put on flip charts and the total group contributes to the discussion around each of them. The "What we are doing" and "How do we know" sections may be completed for all programs before moving on to the "Future plans" section. The variations are endless. The key is to answer the questions on the worksheet and collect the information in the manner which is most helpful to your organization.

One caution is that this activity can generate a huge amount of material which can in itself become overwhelming. It is important to put some limits on the amount of ideas and activities with which you want to work. Generate lots of them but then pick the "best five" or the "best three". Decide what your priority will be for the next six months and focus on that instead of trying to do five or ten different projects. This placing of limits and setting of priorities is essential to the planning process since we found that the framework material is so extensive and rich that it generated more ideas than we could possibly focus on at one time.

The log sheets we used throughout all phases of the development of the framework helped us organize our work. They were useful in capturing the key pieces of information and making comparisons

across groups. Committee members found them easy and quick to complete and a good tool for summarizing an activity.

- **Worksheet 1: Log Book Worksheet**

The planning process and the evaluation process are closely linked. The documentation which we must have in order to evaluate if our programs are working and whether they are making a difference is identified through the planning process. Completing the section on the goal worksheet "Is it working and how do we know" is the first stage in preparing for an evaluation.

3. Setting Priorities

One of the challenges we faced in all our discussions about services for abused women and their children was that the work which "had to be done" was always far greater than the resources needed to do it. As a group we tended to take on everything and had real difficulty setting priorities since this meant some things would not get done or would have to be delayed. Working with the framework material often generated even more good ideas about what "must be done" so we developed the following activity to help us set priorities and put some limits on our work.

Activity 7: Setting Priorities Using the Framework

4. Orientation of New Staff

Several members of our committee used the framework material to orient new staff members to their program. Using the wheel they discussed values and beliefs and then reviewed the six elements, outlining the key activities for each element in which their program was involved. They found the wheel helped them organize the discussion and provided the new staff person with a visual context in which to understand the interrelationships and variety of the different work activities.

5. Preparation of Individual Workplans

One staff person in one of the organizations in which we tested the material said that she found the framework very useful as a tool to review her own work and establish a personal workplan. She had been feeling overwhelmed and pulled in different directions in her work in a children's program. Using the wheel she listed the different activities in which she was involved for each of the elements. Doing this exercise helped her to see more clearly just how much she was doing. She then picked her priority areas (which meant letting go of some others!) and established her goals for the following year. Having this plan in place helped her to say no to some requests and to feel more in control of her work. She commented that as a student on placement she always was required to go through this process but once she was hired as a regular staff member the process was abandoned. A lesson for all of us.

6. Proposal Writing

A lot of the time put into developing the framework was spent in defining clear goal statements for the six elements of service delivery. statements very useful when they were preparing funding proposals. Rather than "reinventing the wheel" yet one more time, they used the goal statements from the framework or adapted them to fit their project. The ideas for implementing the goals were often easily reworked as objectives and the whole proposal writing procedure was simplified and faster.

7. Developing Needs Assessments

The framework wheel can be helpful in organizing for a needs assessment. One of our committee members was setting up a new aboriginal women's support service and used the following activity as part of the planning for the development of the needs assessment.

Activity 8: Designing a Needs Assessment

8. Designing for Effective Committee Work

We all know from experience that committee work can be boring or energizing, a waste of time or an important and creative part of our work life. The framework committee met only once a month for two hours so it was very important that our time be well used. Every meeting was planned in advance so that the process of building continually moved forward and so that we all had fun while learning and working together.

One of the methods we used consistently on the committee to ensure our work got done in a way that was energizing and effective, was to begin every meeting with a warm-up activity. These warmups created an atmosphere of fun, closeness and openness among committee members and even though they took time away from the "work agenda" we always found it was time well spent. A well designed warm-up activity is a way of putting into practice many of the values reflected on the framework wheel.

For examples of some of the activities we tried, refer to:

Worksheet 6: Icebreakers and Warm-ups

9 Building Co-ordinated Community Services

The framework materials can be helpful at a community level to build strong co-ordinating bodies and to plan and promote a co-operative system of service delivery, funding and resource allocation. The framework wheel and the six elements of service delivery can be used:

- to assess the whole range of services for abused women and their children offered in a community
- to identify gaps in service
- to set priorities for community action
- to avoid duplication of service and
- to encourage joint projects.

Many organizations do not have the resources to implement on their own all the elements of the wheel but in partnership with others are able to contribute to a joint program.

Activity 6: Reviewing Service Goals Using the Framework

can be easily adapted for use with groups of community based organizations delivering a range of services to abused women and their children.

Activity 10: Strengthening Co-ordination of Services

Worksheet 5: Co-ordination of Services

These are useful tools to evaluate how effectively we are co-ordinating services in our community. We used this activity with our framework committee members who represent a wide range of community organizations and networks and we came up with some very practical and creative ideas for improving co-ordination.

10. Strengthening Accountability to Staff and Volunteers

"Accountability to the women we serve" has always been a fundamental principle of the services developed by women for women and is a fundamental principle of this framework. What has not always been as rigorously pursued is accountability to staff and volunteers who deliver these services. The failure to do so means that in many transition homes and community based counselling programs for women victims of violence, the idealism, the energy and the hopefulness with which many of us began our jobs has been slowly but surely worn down. Some workers have been overheard to say that there are times when they feel hopeless, helpless ...in short like victims themselves.

We are the "experts" at helping women move from the victim role to that of survivor and beyond. We must do the same for ourselves by learning some effective ways of reclaiming and building the kinds of work environments that we want. A practical and useful activity with which to start work on this issue is:

- **Activity 9: Evaluating Accountability to Staff and Volunteers**
- **Worksheet 4: Accountability Worksheet**

The list of ideas above represents only some of the ways the framework has been used. Here are a few more examples from our committee members to illustrate the variety of uses we have found for this material. We hope they will "inspire" you to use the framework material and make it work for you.

- " I used the framework materials **to plan a staff retreat.** . We adapted the belief statements to reflect the broad range of services offered by our multi-service centre (see worksheet 11 for the adaptation) and developed a new vision statement for our work. We used activities 2, 3 and 5 with all the staff and found they worked well to promote productive discussion".
- "The **hiring ad for a new co-ordinator** for our organization clearly stated our commitment to the community framework model of service. All applicants for the job had to answer a written question on the framework, explaining how each element of the wheel could be integrated into the the community centre as a whole."
- " In **developing a protocol** for our agency we used ideas from the framework material to ensure accountability of our services to our clients."
- "We are using the framework goals to ensure that **groups for male batterers are held accountable** to the same beliefs, values and practices which underly services for abused women."
- " We found the framework very helpful in the development of our **sexual assault network.** Acceptance of the beliefs and values of the framework was seen as an essential requirement for involvement in our group."
- "I'm a member of the philosophy committee of the National Alliance of Second Stage Housing. We found the statement of the problem and the values material in the framework particularly useful in helping us **develop the philosophy** for the Alliance."
- "I'm on a committee which is developing a project to improve the links between services for abused women and addiction services. We used the framework wheel as a tool to highlight the important **differences between women-centred services and medical-model services.**"
- "We used the values and beliefs of the framework to evaluate our multicultural services and as a starting point for the development of a **multicultural policy.**"

Evaluation and the Framework

- **Introduction**

The community has come to expect certain services and has indicated its trust by donating and allocating to us significant sums of money to meet the needs of abused women and their children. In a relatively short period of time services for abused women have become an integral part of the service delivery system. With this confidence and level of expectation has also come the need to be accountable to more people and organizations including government funders. To do this effectively this framework acknowledges the importance of developing ongoing, effective and efficient methods for collecting key information from diverse sources to assist with wise decision making.

Evaluation is one of the six elements of the framework wheel. That means that evaluation needs to be a part of everyday work and it needs to be done in a way that practices the values of the outer rim of the framework wheel.

The reality for all of us on the committee is that the way we have experienced evaluation in our lives has rarely practiced the values being promoted by this framework. Most of us had to admit that we considered evaluation to be something that should be done but that we would just as soon avoid as long as possible because of numerous negative experiences we have all had. The other common experience we had with evaluation was that it was removed from everyday life, was shrouded in mysterious specialized language and skills and generally was done for someone else's benefit.

We used the framework values to redefine evaluation for ourselves so that it becomes a tool for learning rather than a tool of judgement. Participant focussed evaluation provided the methodology that helped us maintain this focus.

- **Evaluation: a way to hold ourselves accountable**

Our determination to make evaluation "part of the way we do business" led us to think of evaluation as the activities that we need to carry out to hold ourselves, our programs and the systems we develop for managing the programs accountable. The beliefs underlying the framework led us to identify three levels of accountability. These include accountability to:

- the women and children in our communities who use the service
- the paid staff and volunteers who work in the programs
- the wider community which pays for the service

The goals that we established for the evaluation element of the framework correspond to the three levels of accountability listed above. See the goals and ideas for meeting the goals on pages 31-33.

- **Evaluation Questions**

We used four evaluation questions as the basis for evaluation strategies aimed at keeping ourselves accountable. These questions are:

- 1. What work do we do and why?**

Information gathered to answer this question will assist us in evaluating if our services are still relevant. Have the needs of women survivors of violence changed? Is our service adapting to these changing conditions and how are we doing it? Have we identified gaps that need to be confronted?

- 2. Are we doing what we said we would do?**

To what extent did we achieve our stated goals and objectives? Are the funders and the wider community getting the service for which they agreed to pay?

- 3. Are there better ways to do what we do?**

What is working well and what isn't? Are there other groups in the community which could or should be involved in this work? Are there more efficient ways of doing what we do?

4. What difference does our work make?

What impact does our work have on women who use the service, staff and volunteers and on the community?

No matter how simple or complicated we choose to make our evaluation strategies we determined that these are the four fundamental questions that we need to answer. Keeping these four questions in front of us at the up-front planning phase of yearly organization, committee and worker workplans, project proposals, action plans for activities and any other systematic goal oriented activity has helped us make evaluation an integral part of our work. Planning how we will answer these questions at the same time as we develop our action plans has helped us:

- create much more specific goals, objectives and action plans
- identify what information we need to collect and how we will collect it right at the beginning of the cycle
- develop simple and useable summaries
- use the evaluation information as we collect it to help us improve what we do as we do it

Evaluation used for learning rather than for passing judgment

We used the framework values (outside rim of the framework wheel) to help us develop the principles that underlie evaluation for learning. Effective evaluation:

- is ongoing, practical and useful
- promotes confidence, builds on strengths and values the contribution of everyone involved
- contributes to effective and responsible planning
- is cost effective and uses the expertise within organizations
- affirms the work that is done and contributes to strengthening and continually improving the work aimed at helping end abuse against women and their children

- **Evaluation as part of the job**

An ongoing evaluation process requires personnel and resources if it is to be successful. Evaluation is very susceptible to being relegated to an "extra" because demands for service continue to compete for staff and volunteer time. The following are ways that might contribute to keeping evaluation a meaningful, manageable and positive experience.

- designate responsibility for the monitoring and coordinating of the evaluation strategy to a coordinating committee of the board of directors.
- designate time in the coordinator's job description for implementing and maintaining the evaluation process
- designate responsibility and time for specific evaluation activities in job descriptions
- designate student placements or volunteer assignments, perhaps with honorariums, to carry out specific evaluation projects
- design concise, user friendly evaluation tools
- follow the policy that no evaluation is complete until a summary of findings is done and presented to the appropriate people in a reasonable time frame
- summarize findings into a format that is brief, clear, highlights the key learnings and is in a form that can be preserved as the permanent record
- maintain a system for storing the summaries that is organized, complete, open to everyone, and provides easily retrievable facts and stories that can be used without having to "root through" hundreds of background papers.
- **Use the collected information. Celebrate the successes.**

The greatest source of help to us and the one we highly recommend you use to help you better understand participant focussed evaluation is:

Keeping on Track, Women's Research Centre,
Vancouver, B.C. (604) 734-0485

- **Preparing ourselves for evaluation**

The following information is included to demonstrate how we began the process of teaching ourselves how to make evaluation work for us. Using the participant focussed methodology we chose to develop tools for evaluating support groups for abused women because in Ottawa encouraging women to become involved in such groups is the preferred method of service. At this time an extensive network of support groups for abused women is in place which crosses organization barriers.

The process we used to inform ourselves was as follows:

1. Participation in a two hour introductory workshop to learn more about the skills that are required to carry out participant focussed evaluation. The five skills are:
 - writing clear, measureable goals and objectives
 - applying the four basic evaluation questions to the goals and objectives in order to identify the kind of information which needs to be collected and how the information can be collected
 - designing easy to use information collection tools
 - creating useful summaries
 - transferring the information collected through evaluation into key learnings that can be used in the planning process
2. Developing and getting agreement among group facilitators on clear, measurable goals and objectives for our support groups so we agree on what we are evaluating. For copies of two of the worksheets we used for helping us do this see:
 - **Worksheet 7: Writing Measureable Goals and Objectives**
 - **Worksheet 8: Support Groups Discussion Paper**

3. Participation in a one day workshop to collectively develop evaluation tools for support groups. For examples of two of the tools group leaders developed see:
 - **Worksheet 9: Participants Review Guide**
 - **Workshop 10: Evaluation Guide for Group Facilitators**
4. Testing the tools in the support groups for abused women
5. Summarizing experiences from each of the groups and incorporating them into a summary of key learnings

During the second year of the Community Framework Project we were able to complete the first 4 steps. Step 5 is in progress as this is being written.

Evaluation continues to be a huge challenge for us. Most of us still approach the whole notion of evaluation with some distrust. One change for us is that we at least believe that participant focussed evaluation does hold out promise for building systems of accountability that make sense to us and does reflect the values of the framework. We will continue over the next few years to build our confidence by increasing our evaluation skill level. Using evaluation to learn how to do what we do better makes sense to us.