

## **CAVA Presentation**

(45 mins)

### **I. Introduction of Presenters**

#### **Sharon Taylor – Executive Director of Wolseley Family Place**

I am presently the Executive Director of Wolseley Family Place. I have been in this position for the past 8 years.

I am an accomplished leader adept at developing and guiding diverse teams to deliver holistic and comprehensive services and programs within the not for profit sector. I have worked for the not for profit sector for approximately 20 years.

I have received my Masters in Sociology from the University of Manitoba, a diploma in Social Work and have also studied at the University of Winnipeg, University of Saskatchewan, University of Brandon, and Concordia University and have certificates for Community Development and Community Capacity Building, Collaboration and Partnerships, Managing and Leading in the Non-Profits and Participative Management.

I have been involved on various National Advisory committees on topics such as Governance of Community Based Organizations; Volunteer Management; Homelessness and Food Security.

I am presently a board member for the following organizations – Manitoba Public Health Association; Resolve; West Broadway Development Corporation; Provincial Council of Women; Graffiti Art and CLOUT.

#### **Lorna Monkman – Program Coordinator-- New Realities Program**

Lorna was born and raised in Winnipeg and is a descendant of Red River Metis.

Lorna presently works full time as a program coordinator at Wolseley Family Place for the New Realities project, assisting families with issues of family violence and substance abuse.

Lorna has worked extensively with Aboriginal people, communities and organizations in Winnipeg and Northwestern Ontario, providing victim-offender mediation, community justice circles, group facilitation, conflict resolution and mediation training.

Lorna completed a B.A. in Conflict Resolution Studies and Justice and Law Enforcement Studies in 1997 and currently teaches as a sessional instructor at Menno Simons College - Faculty of Conflict Resolution Studies; she is also a trainer for the Civil Service Commission of Manitoba around diversity issues; a volunteer mediator and associate trainer at Mediation Services; and a volunteer with the United Way of Winnipeg.

## **II. Wolseley Family Place – Overview**

Wolseley Family Place (WFP) is a non-profit, community-based family resource centre which serves families with children living in the inner city of Winnipeg. This neighbourhood is known for its violence and crime, alcohol and drug misuse, substandard housing and poverty.

The overall goal of WFP is to provide a community-based continuum of education and service to families ‘at risk’. WFP recognizes that the health of families is linked to the conditions of their lives and to their ability to influence these conditions. WFP works with families to assist them to develop the information, skills and confidence that they need to care for them and their children. WFP affirms the right of all families to self-determination within their own culture, spiritual and social context, and endeavours to link the program with others who share these goals.

The work of WFP is guided by principles that focus on building supportive relationships, facilitating growth, respecting diversity, and furthering community development. Program areas include parent/child education, family preservation, child care and development, health and safety issues, food and nutrition sessions, recreational activities, life skills and awareness workshops, employment support, community development, literacy programs, and leadership development. WFP evolves in response to evolving needs of the community.

The demographic characteristics of the WFP service population can be described as follows:

- 95% of the children are under age 6
- 65% are aboriginal
- 75% are on social assistance
- 70% have not completed high school
- 80% are single parents

## **III. Vision and Action: Responding to an Identified Need in Our Community**

The vision for New Realities arose out of a pattern that we noticed in the daily course of our work with families – many were living with family violence and/or substance use issues that at times escalated to the point that men, often fathers and partners -- were arrested, charged and jailed for a period of time, or women fled the home with their children to go to a shelter.

Eventually, many of the women and the men reunited as a family unit and the old patterns of violence, often accompanied by substance use, continue. Many of these families talk about a desire to keep their families together, and express frustration at finding themselves back in the same spot, repeating the same behaviour.

The New Realities project began in early February 2006 with the main purpose of working with men and their families to intervene in the cycles of problematic substance use and family violence. The main purpose and goal of New Realities is to work with families, using peer mentors as a positive community link for men and women as they transition back to their family and community. New Realities will work with various members of the family over the long term to assist in meeting individualized and evolving needs and by engaging supports such as safety planning, mentoring and peer support, coaching, family group conferences, education and skill development in interpersonal communication and life skills, networking and socializing activities as well as active referral linkages with partners and resources in the community.

#### **IV. From Current Realities to New Realities**

##### **Families' Stories**

WFP families have a great deal of knowledge and lived experience concerning the impact of substance abuse and violence on their lives and the lives of their children. These stories speak to the level of need and the readiness of community members to effect change in their lives.

##### **This Time I Want it to be Different**

*My name is Don (46) and I am set to be released from Headingley Correctional Centre in the next few weeks. I am in here again for assaulting my partner. The 3 months that I have been locked up have helped me to get back on a better track. I haven't drank for 3 months and I feel healthier and motivated to make different choices and be a better partner and dad.*

*But I also feel scared. As the day approaches, I am well aware that I have felt this way before and all my good intentions have winded up producing the opposite result. This is my pattern... get out of jail, reconcile with my partner and children, the honeymoon period lasts for a little while, I get a job and feel productive, then I get a paycheck and go for a couple drinks after work and before you know it, I have been on a drinking binge for 5 days straight. When I finally end up back home, I have no money, I've lost my job, my wife tells me its over and then I fight her, she calls the cops and I'm arrested and back to Headingley. This time, I want it to be different.*

##### **I Finally Had A Family**

*My name is Jocelyn. I'm 34 years old and I have a 4 year old daughter with a guy named Derek. At first, things with Derek were great. We cared about each other and had fun together. I finally had a family, a place where I was needed and loved.*

*Derek and I partied together, and I liked feeling that I could still get out, even though I'm a mom now and I love my daughter deeply. Derek started bringing*

*out crack at parties. He told me I should try it and I did because we were drinking and it kept him happy. It didn't take long before I was hooked on crack. Things really started to get out of control, and Derek and I were fighting all the time. We eventually split up, and he began to threaten to take our daughter away because I was such a mess. I wanted to stop, because I love my daughter and started to get scared I might lose her.*

*I decided to change my life and go through treatment. I'm off the drugs and Derek sees our daughter often, and he keeps talking about getting back together and being a family again. Sometimes I want that too, my daughter to have a solid family, but I'm scared of getting into the same old pattern again. I'm committed to staying clean and sober for my daughter.*

### **New Realities: An Integrated Approach To Family Violence and Problematic Substance Use**

In our daily work, as we engage men and women in conversations about their current realities, they share with us about their struggles as well as their hopes and dreams for themselves and of their love for their children -- how they want to discover or regain a sense of stability, build or recapture a strong family unit and heal so that they can be a solid source of support for their children.

This is how we view our work – assisting men and women to build on their strengths; to share knowledge about the dynamics of family violence and problematic substance use so that we can increase their awareness and their ability to influence the conditions in their lives; to reduce their sense of feeling isolated and alone; and to ultimately diminish the destructiveness of family violence in our communities.

Our aim is to provide a strong link from institutions to community – from treatment, jail, safe houses, etc. when people are wanting and intending to return to their family situations and where they have the desire to break the cycles of family violence and substance abuse

We want to emphasize that our program has 2 main areas of focus:

- i. Men and women that are expressing a desire to reconcile, to keep their family unit intact and who prefer assistance in establishing a non-violent relationship.
- ii. Families that are not together and do not wish to reconcile, but currently have a high level of conflict and where they have the desire to establish a co-parenting relationship that is characterized by reduced conflict and healthier communication.

## V. Process and Intervention -- What We Offer

- **Peer support development and training** – Our project is currently developing training for mentors who will provide peer support for men and women dealing with issues related to family violence and problematic substance use. Our mentors will be community members who have overcome similar issues and/or wish to contribute time to assisting others to build healthier, more peaceful relationships.
- **Support Groups**  
Support groups will be started specifically targeting men at first, and covering topics that are relevant to what the men want to work on. We plan to respond to women's and youth issues in similar ways.
- **Family Group Conferencing**  
A process designed to bring families and professionals together that utilizes participatory decision-making to make key decisions and plans around specific issues. Follow up work with families to provide support to carry out plans and agreements is a critical part of this process. In Canada, Family Group Conferencing reduced child maltreatment and domestic violence, and advanced children's development in 3 different communities: an Inuit settlement, a rural population, and an urban centre.
- **Advocacy** – Housing, employment, CFS, legal issues, etc.
- **Parenting classes** – Attachment, anger, conflict resolution, communicating so that kids will listen, etc.
- **Healthy Child Development** – Prenatal and Healthy Start
- **Child care** for those accessing our services. Short term respite and supervised access services.
- **Health educator and access to doctor services** and Tuesday afternoons
- **Cooking and nutrition classes and workshops.** Food bank and emergency food services.
- **Referrals** – we have links and relationships with many organizations, both government and community. We are actively working to be able to provide effective referrals and to increase access to resources for families who are in need of services we cannot or do not directly provide, such as counseling, addictions recovery, cultural resources and services, youth and children's supports, etc.

## VI. Philosophy

- **Empowerment – strengths-based approach:** A focus on what people have as opposed to what they are lacking. For example, we will assist those that we work with to identify what types of relationships that they want to have with their partners and their children. We focus on what they already have that will help them achieve their goals and what they might want to do to gain additional knowledge, awareness and skills for short and long term change. A

large part of empowerment is a focus on what people can do as opposed to what they cannot do. We take an approach that is “hard” on the problem, “soft” on people, separating wrongdoing from the person.

Employing both high support and high accountability, New Realities works **WITH** participants to encourage active, thoughtful and cooperative engagement, and inviting all others affected by the offensive behaviour to participate directly in the process of healing and accountability.

- **TO** = admonishing or punishing by disqualification from the program, or requiring preconceived things. For example, complete 30 hours of counseling, whether you want to or not, and asking and/or receiving little active or thoughtful involvement. (Punitive)
  - **FOR** = Asking for little in return in terms of active or thoughtful responses from those involved, or making excuses for the behaviour. (Permissive)
  - **NOT** = Not providing services if violence, substance use is still occurring or cross charges, or no contact or communication orders are not being observed, or not doing anything in response to offending behaviour. (Neglectful)
- **Participant-centered** – Involves having families decide what they need and how they want to achieve those needs – the participants in our program have real input and real power to shape the direction of their own lives, according to their needs and what they define as truly supportive in their quest for change.

We’ve also engaged participants through focus groups to get their input and ideas about what would work well for them in the program -- from peer support, environment at Wolseley Family Place, program content, evaluation and intake questions.

- **Multi-dimensional** – Various members of the family have different needs, often at the same time. For example, if violence or substance use is still occurring in the process of people moving toward change, we will assist family members to make safety plans, time out plans, assist in finding temporary housing or ways that they can reduce harm in the event of ongoing violence or substance use.

This also means, for example, that an addiction may be related to childhood sexual abuse, and it may be difficult to resolve one without first resolving the other.

- **Holistic** – Working with various aspects of a person or a family that includes mental, emotional, spiritual and physical.

For example, a person struggling physically may also feel very low emotionally but may have a strong sense of spirit.

The family also has all of these aspects, and may be out of balance in different ways. Our program will strive to consider different aspects of a person and a family and provide support, education and approaches that will be responsive to these aspects.

## **VII.**

### **Criteria**

- Primary focus – safety for partner and children who experienced or have been exposed to abuse or violence
- Willingness to voluntarily participate and engage in exploring avenues of change
- Willingness to take responsibility and be accountable for violence or problematic substance use
- Prepared to accept consequences of behaviour and actions