Canada’s Family Violence Initiative

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Family Violence - The Public Health Perspective

• Serious impacts for all Canadians, across the lifespan:
  – Psychological and drug/alcohol abuse
  – Physical injury, often exacerbating chronic health problems
  – Economic impacts, ripple effects on health

• A preventable public health problem…

• And a multi-sectoral public health challenge
The Canadian Context

Federal Government

• National leadership and coordination
• Legislative authority (*Criminal Code*)

13 Provincial/Territorial Governments

• Provision of health, social, and education services and administration of justice

Other key players

• Municipal governments & non-government organizations
Nature and extent of FV in Canada

• 7% of women and 6% of men reported spousal violence in previous 5 years
• In 2007, spousal violence accounted for 12% of all police-reported violent crime in Canada
• In 2008, there were an estimated 85,440 substantiated cases of child maltreatment

• Priority population groups
  – Aboriginal women – spousal violence rate 3x higher than other Canadian women
  – Aboriginal children are overrepresented in the child protection system
What is the Family Violence Initiative?

- A horizontal collaboration involving 15 federal departments
- Led by the Public Health Agency of Canada
  - National Clearinghouse on Family Violence
  - Senior Management Steering Committee
  - Interdepartmental and Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Groups
- Other key federal players include Status of Women, Justice, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Indian and Northern Affairs, Statistics Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Funding
  - $7 Million per year shared among 8 departments
Mandate of Family Violence Initiative

The FVI is centred around three main objectives:

• Promoting public awareness of family violence and risk and protective factors

• Working with government, research and community partners to strengthen the capacity of the health, housing, social and criminal justice systems to respond

• Supporting data collection, research and evaluation efforts to identify innovative/promising practices and a range of effective interventions
Family Violence Initiative Accomplishments

In partnership with provinces and territories and other key stakeholders, the Initiative has contributed to:

- Changes in public understanding
- More and improved shelter services
- Enhanced data on various forms of family violence and the ability to analyze trends over time
- Legislative Amendments to the criminal code of Canada to improve laws to address family violence
Considerations in Applying a Horizontal Model

- Promotes partnerships and establishes mechanisms for coordinated action
- Contributes to global violence prevention efforts
- Supports public health approach
- Inherent limitations
Current Focus and Future Directions

- Continue to strengthen and promote the public health approach as a means to prevent violence
  - Focus on coordinated, multi-sectoral action
  - Focus on building the evidence base

- Emphasis on needs of sub-populations
  - Aboriginal families
  - Immigrant and refugee women
Thank you.

For more information on Canada’s Family Violence Initiative please contact the:
National Clearinghouse on Family Violence
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