

# Child Protection Services for Children of Battered Women: Practice and Controversy<sup>1</sup>

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Doctor Smith, family physician, writes a child protection worker. She states that Dan, age ten, has been deemed a gifted student but is failing in school. Doctor Smith is worried about Dan's emotional well-being. She links Dan's somatic complaints and suicidal ideation to living in an abusive environment.

Doctor Smith complains that Dan's stepfather Bill, who is still mainlining heroin, is physically and emotionally abusive towards Dan's mother Helen. In fact, she states that Dan witnessed Sam trying to strangle his mother last weekend. The doctor reminds the child protection worker that this is the third letter she has written about her concerns and notes that Helen still refuses to leave her abusive partner. The doctor demands that Dan be removed from the abusive environment.

What should the child protection worker do? What can the child protection worker do?

The response of child protection workers to the needs of child witnesses of woman abuse in Canada and the United States is as varied as the provinces and states that make up the two countries. Allegations that child witnesses of woman abuse are in need of protection often can result in inconsistent, and sometimes inappropriate responses by agencies mandated to protect children. It is no surprise then, that a great deal of controversy surrounds the issue of how child protection workers intervene in such cases.

In the situation just presented, variations in attitudes, laws and practices could lead to a multitude of approaches as to how the child protection worker would intervene. They also could result in a militating dichotomy: if the child protection worker does not remove Dan from the abusive environment, he is criticized for failing to protect the child. If he removes him, he is accused of revictimizing the child's mother.

In this chapter we look at the difficulties that child protection workers face when trying to make a situation safe for children who witness woman abuse. Four areas are examined: 1) the role of Child Protection Services; 2) whether a child who witnesses woman abuse can be defined as a child in need of protection; 3) how Child Protection Services currently respond to woman abuse and child witnesses of woman abuse; and 4) roadblocks and barriers in responding to child witnesses of woman abuse. We conclude the chapter with recommendations for improving the response to the needs of child witnesses of woman abuse.

## **Introduction to Child Protection Services**

Child Protection Services represent in a tangible way a community's values and norms regarding children. Child Protection Services are mandated to protect society's customs, and standards concerning child-rearing practices. Child Welfare policies define when and how the state should intervene in a family's life. In Canada and the United States it is the Child Protection Service's responsibility to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. Child Protection Services are supportive and directed at strengthening the family unit. Services may include individual, couple, family and group counselling. In-home support services also may be offered. If services do not exist within the Child Protection Service agency, child protection workers attempt to link clients with community resources. Clients who are involved with Child Protection Services have either a voluntary or involuntary relationship with the agency.

Child Protection workers, employed by child welfare agencies, are empowered by law to act as agents for the government. They are given the authority to take whatever action is deemed necessary to protect a child living in a dangerous situation (Vayda & Satterfield, 1984). When voluntary services are ineffective at protecting children, child protection workers can use the power vested in them by the state, to protect children from harm. Within the framework of *parens patriae* (the protector of subjects unable to protect themselves) and *loco parentis* (the power to stand in the place of the parents), the state has the authority to act in the best interests of and for the protection of children (Wilkerson, 1973). For example, if a child's level of care falls below the minimum community standard set out in legislation, the child protection worker can remove a child from the parent's care. In these cases it is expected that the rights of the parents should be abrogated only when there is compelling evidence that the child is at risk of harm while in the parent's care. When removal of a child is seen as the only alternative for protecting a child from harm, child protection workers must weigh the impact of moving a child into a system that is plagued with problems against leaving a child in an abusive environment.

Protecting children from harm is complex, fast paced, risky work. Child protection workers must be able to quickly investigate, identify, assess, and treat a problem in a systematic and innovative way, often despite the resistance of the people for whom help is intended. Unlike other areas of social work where clinical skills are the primary focus, a child protection worker must be able to investigate like a

policeman, think like a lawyer and treat like a social worker (Vogel, 1987). The goal of child protection workers is to protect children from abuse and neglect.

## **Child Witnessing and Child Abuse**

Are child witnesses of woman abuse abused children? Child abuse has been described as any form of physical harm, emotional deprivation, neglect, or sexual maltreatment which can result in injury or psychological damage to a child (Dawson 1990).

Children who have been abused typically exhibit patterns of maladaptive behaviours. Although some of the behaviours are commonly seen in all children at one time or another, when they are pervasive and lasting, rather than isolated and temporary they may indicate child abuse. Behaviours which describe children who have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused fall into four broad categories. Abused children may be (1) overly compliant, (b) extremely aggressive, (c) demonstrate overly adaptive behaviours and (d) experience lags in their development. Other general behaviours that characterize abused children include an inability to form trusting relationships, role reversal, suicidal ideation, low self-esteem, learning problems, oppositional or behavioural disorders such as rebellion, running away, lying, and stealing (Dawson, 1990).

Children who witness woman abuse exhibit symptoms similar to children who have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused (Hershorn & Rosenbaum, 1985; Wolfe & Mosk, 1983, Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson & Zak, 1986). Studies have shown that exposure to woman abuse can result in internalizing behaviour problems such as depression, low self esteem and withdrawal and externalizing behaviour problems such as rebellion, hyperactivity, and delinquency (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 1990; Sinclair, 1985; Pressman, 1989; Moore, Pepler, Mae & Kates, 1989).

Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson describe in their book *Children of Battered Women* (1990) the devastating effect that witnessing woman abuse can have on a child's cognitive, emotional, social, developmental, and physical well-being. They state that a child's response to woman abuse varies according to age, sex, stage of development and role in the family. They identify other factors that affect the child's response to witnessing woman abuse including the frequency of the violence, economic and social disadvantage, repeated separations and moves and special needs that a child might have (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 1990). Researchers have identified the following symptoms in children who witness woman abuse.

In addition to psychological, cognitive and behavioural adjustment problems, researchers have shown that children from violent homes are at increased risk of being injured themselves (Carlson, 1984). Layzer, Goodson and deLange (1986) found that 70% of the children admitted to shelters were direct victims of abuse and neglect. Shelter studies also showed that children who are exposed to woman abuse

may be at risk of neglect or abuse by their mothers who are suffering from the cumulative stress of being victimized (McLeod, 1987).

Perpetuating violence also has been identified as possibly related to a history of witnessing woman abuse, suggesting a cause-and-effect relationship between the two (Pagelow, 1981 & Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). Some studies have found male children who witnessed woman abuse to be at increased risk of becoming perpetrators, and female children who witness woman abuse to be at increased risk of becoming victims (Hughes & Hampton, 1984).

So are child witnesses of woman abuse abused children? Yes. Review of the literature shows that they exhibit similar symptoms to those of abused children, who are at risk of physical harm, and are likely to perpetuate violence. Although not necessarily the direct victims of violence, their exposure to woman abuse should define them as children in need of protection. Yet millions of children who suffer the effects of witnessing woman abuse (Carlson, 1984) are not adequately protected by Child Protection Services. Unfortunately the phrases "child abuse" and "child witnessing of woman abuse" mean different things to different people. This variability can result in a haphazard response to children exposed to woman abuse.

## **Current Responses by Child Protection Services to Woman Abuse and Child Witnesses of Woman Abuse**

Responses of Child Protection Services to children who witness woman abuse are often dramatically different from their responses to children who have been neglected or have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused. Confusion around whether a child who is witnessing woman abuse is an abused child and in need of protection can result in varied responses. Consider the following three cases.

Mrs. S contacts the Child Protection Service Agency to report ongoing fighting between her neighbours. She has heard glass breaking, children crying, a male shouting obscenities and a female begging not to be hit again. Mrs. S is worried about the safety of the three preschooler children living in the home. The Child Protection worker asks Mrs. S if she has ever seen either of the parents hitting the children or whether she has noticed if the children had any injuries. When Ms. S says that she hasn't, the Child Protection worker says the child is not being abused. The case is closed.

A school psychologist contacts the Child Protection Service to report that Harry, age 11, is having a number of problems in school. She describes Harry as an aggressive child who is impulsive and quick tempered. She reports that Harry's severe temper tantrums have kept him from establishing positive relationships

with the other school children. The psychologist states that Harry has above-average ability but is failing academically. She states that Harry recently disclosed that he saw his father trying to strangle his mother. The psychologist believes strongly that Harry is in need of protection. The Child Protection worker shares the psychologist's concerns, contacts the family and offers services. But the family refuses them. Since Harry is not seen as being at risk of harm according to the law, the case is closed.

A local police officer contacts Child Protection Services while investigating a case of woman abuse. He reported that Mrs. T, mother of three children, was physically assaulted by her partner, Mr. D, the previous evening. He states that Mr. D left the home and his whereabouts are unknown. The police officer states that he plans to arrest Mr. D when he finds him and that he will obtain an order to prohibit Mr. D from accessing Mrs. T and her children. The police officer states that Mrs. T told him that she and her children would be at risk of physical harm if Mr. D returned home. Mrs. T also stated that she would be unable to prevent Mr. D from entering the home if he returned. Mrs. T stated she was not prepared to call the police when Mr. D showed up. The Child Protection worker investigates the report and offers to help Mrs. T relocate to a shelter for battered women. Mrs. T refuses to leave the house. The Child Protection worker then suggests that the children be placed with family or friends. Mrs. T turns down the suggestion. Deciding that the children would be at risk of physical harm if Mr. D returned to the family home, the child protection worker removed the children from Mrs. T's care.

These examples represent typical responses by Child Protection Services to cases of woman abuse in both Canada and the United States. The variation in responses illustrates how imprecise mandate and a child protection worker's lack of knowledge can result in some child witnesses of woman abuse being protected and other children who are being exposed to woman abuse falling through the cracks of the system. Why is this happening?

Not much has been written about the Child Protection Services response to child witnesses of woman abuse or their mothers. What has been written is very disturbing. Gordon, in her book *Heroes in Our Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (1988), describes the various responses of the Child Protection Services to woman abuse in the Massachusetts Society for the Protection of Children between the years 1880 and 1960. Gordon found that some child protection workers attempted to avoid wife-beating cases; blamed the women for the violence and tended to use gender-neutral euphemisms such as "marital discord" and "marital disharmony" when describing woman abuse. Her research also showed that women in the 1940s were encouraged by child protection workers to remain in abusive situations and were counselled to alter their behaviour to alleviate the violence! What is particularly amazing is the finding that, because of the inadequacy of police protection, battered women continued to ask child protection workers for help despite their outrageous responses.

Callahan (1993), in Wharf's book *Rethinking Child Welfare in Canada*, also discusses the child welfare system's response to battered women. She exposes the victimization that battered women experience when their children are removed by Child Protection Services because the mother has failed or will fail to protect them from the abusive partner. She describes the battered women's loss of self-esteem, loss of child tax credits, reduction of social assistance and ineligibility for housing. Finally Callahan criticizes the child welfare practice for ignoring the poverty and powerlessness of battered women.

Questions arise about why Child Protection Services have failed to find ways to intervene consistently and appropriately in families where woman abuse is occurring. One possible explanation may be related to lack of understanding by some child protection workers of the dynamics of woman abuse. Another major problem seems to be the lack of a workable definition of child abuse that includes children who witness woman abuse.

For example in the United States there are no Federal or State laws which specify that child witnesses of woman abuse are abused children (Peled, 1993). However, virtually all states include emotional abuse, mental injury, or impairment of emotional health as a reportable condition in their child abuse laws (Younes & Besharov, 1988). Unfortunately, many child witnesses of woman abuse have not been protected by this section of the statutes. Defining a child as in need of protection does not seem to be a problem if the case is clearly outrageous by any standards of acceptable parenting, for example, a child witnessing its mother being tortured, locking a child in the basement for days at a time, or tying a child to a bedpost. The difficulty seems to be with those cases where the abuse is not so obvious, where the abuse occurs incrementally and there is no actual or reasonably foreseeable injury to the child. Conceptualizing what is meant by emotional abuse seems to be the problem. While there appears to be a visceral sense that a child who witnesses woman abuse is being emotionally maltreated, most states legislators have failed to develop comprehensive statutory definitions which would define when and how Child Protection Services could intervene. In those few states which have developed statutory definitions of psychologically abusive behaviours (e.g. habitual scapegoating, humiliation of the child, violent acts producing fear or guilt on the part of the child), judges are seldom presented with cases in which only psychological maltreatment is alleged (Melton & Davis, 1987). It seems to be very difficult to state with certainty that the parent's behaviour created severe emotional harm to the child.

Under these circumstances, Child Protection Services are left to decide when and how they should intervene. Given the impreciseness of the definition, and the difficulty proving in court that the behaviours of the child are the result of psychological maltreatment, and the psychological maltreatment was the result of a parent's behaviour, its not surprising then, that there is little uniformity by Child Protection Services in the United States, in responding to allegations that children who are witnessing woman abuse are themselves being abused.

In Canada each province has its own child abuse legislation. Six of the ten provinces stipulate that a child who has witnessed woman abuse can be found to be in need of protection. Legislation exists in the provinces of Saskatchewan, (Family Services Act, 1978), Prince Edward Island, (Family and Child Services Act, 1988), Newfoundland, (Child Welfare Act, 1972) and New Brunswick (Family Services Act, 1980),

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Alberta (Child Welfare Act, 1984) and Nova Scotia (Children and Family Services Act, Nova Scotia, 1990). For example, in Alberta:

a child is emotionally injured; if there is reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the emotional injury is the result of ... exposure to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony. (Child Welfare Act 1984, p.23)

In Nova Scotia

a child is in need of protective services where the child has suffered physical or emotional harm caused by being exposed to repeated domestic violence by or towards a parent or guardian of the child and the child's parent or guardian refuses, fails or refuses to obtain services or treatment to remedy or alleviate the violence. (Children and Family Services Act, 1990 p.10)

The Family Service Act of New Brunswick (1980) states:

The security and development of child may be in danger when the child is living in a situation where there is severe domestic violence (Family Services Act, 1980, p.14)

Although these laws to protect child witnesses of woman abuse are a step in the right direction, they are also problematic. The definitions are too vague, too broad and not inclusive enough. Some pieces of legislation specify emotional harm to the child while others do not. Some pieces of legislation address the developmental and physical harm of the child while others do not. The majority of the legislation uses the term severe domestic violence but offers no guidelines on how to define what is meant by "severe."

Another problem with all of the legislative acts is the use of the gender-neutral terms, "domestic violence" and "domestic disharmony." Defining the act of violence so that the perpetrator is not identifiable disguises the fact that the victims in "domestic violence" are women and children. Gender neutrality also obscures the attribution of responsibility to the battering male. Currently the laws present a distorted picture. The acts do not portray the picture of a man beating a woman and children being hurt because of this. Is this accidental or deliberate?

Given the above criticism, it is not surprising that these sections of the provincial child protection legislation are rarely used. Discussion with child protection workers from the provinces which have this type of legislation cite reasons why they do not take advantage of their legislation. They state that problems with proving that a child who witnesses woman abuse has experienced damage, and lack of judicial support results in these cases being ignored and other abuse cases which have a clearer mandate getting priority. They recognize and state with frustration that unlike children who have been neglected,

abandoned or sexually or physically abused, children who witnesses woman abuse rarely have their right to be protected from harm exercised.

This discussion demonstrates the importance of the child protection worker's knowledge of the dynamics of woman abuse and of a precise definition of what is meant by child abuse (especially as it pertains to child witnesses of woman abuse). However, the lack of a clear mandate or lack of knowledge of the dynamics of woman abuse should not excuse, but can explain, the inconsistent and inappropriate response by Child Protection Services to children who are witnessing woman abuse. Whether Child Protection Services should have a mandate to intervene in cases of woman abuse, however, is very controversial. This controversy has created additional roadblocks to effective intervention with child witnesses of woman abuse.

## **Roadblocks To Better Intervention**

Why has there not been better intervention with child witnesses of woman abuse? Researchers have identified the trauma they experience; the parallels with children who have been physically, sexually and emotionally abused have been well documented; and some child welfare legislation to protect child witnesses of woman abuse, although problematic, has been in place for more than 20 years. Three major barriers to intervening with child witnesses of woman abuse seem to be (a) an ongoing lack of awareness of the effects of woman abuse, (b) an overwhelmed child protection system, and (c) a strong resistance by advocates for battered woman's to legislation and to child protection services. These roadblocks, which have interfered with the development of more and better interventions for child witnesses of woman abuse, are the focus of this section.

### **Lack of Public Awareness**

Despite the intense efforts of many people, woman abuse and its effect on children, has not been identified as a serious social problem in Canada and the United States. Although millions of dollars have been spent in both countries, the massive public education program has been unsuccessful in increasing public awareness. Government studies have focused on identifying the number of women and children living in abusive situations, factors which contribute to woman abuse and possible solutions to the problem.

Recently, a Panel of Violence against Women, appointed by the Canadian government, spent more than \$10 million examining the problem of woman abuse. Particularly disheartening was its finding that despite ongoing intensive efforts to educate the public, there still exists a lack of awareness regarding the staggering levels of violence against women (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993).

Without social recognition that woman abuse is a pervasive, serious problem the likelihood of receiving adequate resources to meet the needs of children who witness woman abuse is very dismal (Peled, 1993).

Lack of knowledge about the dynamics of woman abuse and its impact on children is found within Child Protection Services and affects the provision of services for child witnesses of woman abuse. training about woman abuse in general and child witnesses in particular is usually minimal, if at all available.

### **Overwhelmed Child Protection Service**

Child Protection systems in both the United States and Canada can be described as underfunded, overworked and overwhelmed. Yet reports of child abuse and neglect of children continue to grow in alarming numbers. Overburdened by an increased demand to protect children from being hurt, Child Protection Services and its workers are being severely tested (Zellman & Antler, 1990). In their struggle to meet their mandated roles, Child Protection Services are closing the doors on cases which are considered "less serious" or "voluntary" (Kamerman & Kahn, 1990). Agencies are being forced to turn away cases unless they fit a very narrow definition of what is meant by an abused child. Limited resources has created a cruel and vexing reality. Child abuse cases are being triaged. Priority is being given to abused and neglected children who show visible signs of neglect or abuse (Peled, 1993). Child witnesses of woman abuse do not fit this definition. Their wounds do not show. It is scandalous that Child Protection Services through necessity have become an empty promise for these abused children!

An overtaxed system and a lack of knowledge about woman abuse and its impact on children has hindered the development of programs which would respond to the needs of child witnesses of woman abuse. At a time when governments at all levels should be increasing funding to child protection services they are freezing or cutting back on their annual allocations. With these tough economic times Child Protection Services have been forced to narrow their scope of services in order to meet their existing mandate rather than expand on, or develop new services (Kamerman, & Kahn, 1990). With limited funds for training, resources have been directed mainly toward increasing the knowledge of child protection workers about the dynamics of physical and sexual abuse and neglect and how to respond better to these allegations.

Child Protection Services are reluctant to address the issue of woman abuse. To do so may open Pandora's box. By providing training which would result in increased awareness, caseloads would swell and the cry for program development would be heard throughout both nations. This would only result in draining the already limited resources. Consequently, Child Protection Services have developed an arms length approach to protecting child witnesses of woman abuse issue and have abdicated the responsibility to protect these children. Currently, Child Protection Services policy is to become involved in only those cases of woman abuse where there is actual evidence that the child has been physically injured.

## **Resistance by Advocates for Battered Women**

Battered women's advocates have also been instrumental in thwarting child protection services from becoming involved in the area of woman abuse. Their resistance to the development of specific legislation to deal with child witnesses of women abuse is based on the following reasons.

State interventions contravenes the principles of the feminist movement (Walker, 1990). Feminists are concerned that state intervention will mirror the abused women's experience. It is their concern that legislators who have been primarily male, will continue to develop child welfare policy and practice which traditionally has been built on the oppression of women (Hutchinson, 1992). Battered women and their advocates are fearful that with legislation will come mandatory reporting. It is their concern that mandatory reporting will dramatically change their relationship. Battered women who already have trouble talking about the violence in their lives will become more reluctant to disclose. Battered woman may be forced to be more selective in what they say so as to not risk losing their children. Battered women advocates may be viewed as agents of the state rather than allays of the battered women.

Mandatory reporting could put the battered women's advocates in the unenviable position of having to report a victim of woman abuse to Child Protection Services and her becoming revictimized by a patriarchal system which is perceived to be insensitive to her needs.

Battered women's advocates realize that battered women and their children are not a priority for Child Protection Service. They recognize that child protection workers have limited or no training on the issue of woman abuse and realize that this has resulted in an inconsistent response by Child Protection Services. When reports of woman abuse and possible risk to the children are received they are met with an array of responses. In some cases women are told that woman abuse is not within their mandate and they are ineligible for services. The opposite end of the continuum finds child protection workers who respond by blaming the woman for putting her child at risk. Battered women report that child protection workers fail to recognize the battered woman's history of victimization and minimize or ignore the responsibility of men who batter. In regions where legislation is in place battered women's advocates have been frustrated by child protection services lack of clout to protect women and children and to remove men from the abusive relationship.

## **Recommendations for Children Exposed to Woman Abuse**

This chapter has described the role of Child Protection Services and has shown that a child who witnesses woman abuse is indeed a child in need of protection. Weaknesses and roadblocks in the current system have been examined. Recognizing that child witnesses of woman abuse are abused children and should be protected by society we offer the following recommendations.

First, the continued efforts of battered women's advocates must be acknowledged and woman abuse must be accepted as a serious social problem. The impact that it has on women and the consequences for society are devastating. Woman abuse is not likely to change until there is acceptance that it exists. Everyone has a role in combating its spread.

Second, the impact of witnessing woman abuse on children must also be recognized as a serious social problem. We cannot continue to consider woman abuse as a problem between two adults but must acknowledge that it affects children who witness it. Ongoing research is necessary to further document the short and long term implications that witnessing woman abuse has on children.

Third, clear consistent legislation in both countries needs to be enacted to ensure that the needs of children witnessing woman abuse are protected. Discrepancies in current legislation must be resolved. We recommend that legislation:

- 1) acknowledge that woman abuse and its subsequent impact on children is a social problem
- 2) clearly define child witnesses of woman abuse as children in need of protection
- 3) allow for funding and development of programs to prevent and treat the child victims of woman abuse
- 4) allow ordering perpetrators of woman abuse out of the home until they have successfully completed treatment
- 5) allow child protection workers to remove children when all the lesser intrusive methods of supporting the family have failed
- 6) mandate education and training on feminism, woman abuse, and the impact that woman abuse has on children
- 7) promote and fund research in this area
- 8) increase public awareness and promote public education in woman abuse

Participation by battered women's advocates in the drafting of this legislation is necessary. Their expertise will be essential in developing a clear working definition of woman abuse and the development of guidelines which would assist Child Protection Services in creating intervention strategies for women and children being affected by woman abuse. Battered women advocates can also assist in developing responses necessary to address the needs of women from high risks groups.

Fourth, Child Protection Services in both countries have to recognize the need to accept woman abuse and child witnesses of woman abuse as part of their mandate. They are confronting cases of woman abuse daily and they can no longer attempt to place the responsibilities on the shoulders of women's advocates to deal with this issue. Child Protection Services need to develop their own protocols for the identification of cases where woman abuse is occurring; document the impact that exposure is having on the children; and develop programs to service children, battered women and men who batter.

Fifth, education and training of feminism, woman abuse and the impact that woman abuse has on children for child protection workers must be mandated. Child protection workers need to be made aware of the current research on child witnesses of woman abuse and the parallels with children who have been physically, sexually and emotionally abused. The dynamics of woman abuse and the impact of victimization on parenting needs to be stressed as well as placing total responsibility on the men who batter. Child protection workers need to receive training on how to work cooperatively and effectively with battered woman's advocates.

Sixth, prevention of woman abuse must become a universal priority. All levels of government must earmark funding for woman abuse prevention efforts. Prevention entails improving the socioeconomic conditions of children and their families. It also involves promoting the belief that violence is never acceptable. Violence awareness must be incorporated in the curriculums of the school systems and media violence must be eliminated.

Seventh, and finally all communities in both countries must develop a coordinated response to victims of woman abuse. The participants must include judges, law enforcement departments, crown attorneys, child protection workers, shelter workers, battered women's advocates, mental health workers, medical professionals, politicians, educators, and any other discipline working with or involved with the victims of woman abuse. A coordinated response must ensure that all the systems work together to protect women and children in their own homes from men who abuse them. Communities must recognize that woman abuse is a crime and identify men as being responsible for the violence. A coordinated response will allow for the development of protocols amongst agencies and permit better access to services to women, children and men who batter.

## **Conclusion**

Once Child Protection Services in both countries implement the suggested recommendations a positive response to the letter that opened this chapter would be possible. Dr. Smith would hear that Child Protection Services should and could become more involved with Dan. Child Protection Services could facilitate services for the child, mother and stepfather which focus on woman abuse. Child Protection Services could also link up the stepfather with substance abuse programs. The various agencies involved with the family family physician, school, children's mental health centre would meet regularly

to monitor the family's progress and the risks to the child and mother. If it was felt that the situation was deteriorating and the child was still at risk of harm, the police and child protection court could become involved in removing the stepfather from the home until he had successfully completed his treatment programs. Would this plan work?

In Duluth, Minnesota and London, Ontario coordinated responses which include Child Protection Services have been developed to protect child witness of woman abuse. While the models are different they both involve a number of agencies in their communities constantly working together to improve the plight of battered women. Representatives of these agencies meet regularly to review the delivery of services to women, child victims of woman abuse, and men who batter. Their goal is to improve the coordination of these services. They are concerned about agency accountability, advocacy and research. Specifically, child protection workers are included in the committees in both communities which has resulted in the development of a planned response to the problem of woman abuse and the development of services.

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