

ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITMENTS

Protocol Accountability to Victims and Survivors of Partner Abuse

Signatory Partners will ensure that:

- Services for victims and survivors of partner abuse and their children provided by their organization are compatible with the Belief Statements, Guiding Principles for Service Delivery, and Service Descriptions found in this Protocol.
- The perspectives and needs of victims and survivors of partner abuse and their children are identified and addressed during and throughout the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant services and programs.
- Fair and objective client complaint procedures are accessible and available to victims and survivors of partner abuse using their services. (Please refer to the Service Descriptions for information on who to contact with complaints.) During and subsequent to the client's use of said procedure, she will be treated in a manner consistent with the Victim's Bill of Rights found in Appendix 9 of this Protocol, and in accordance with the Belief Statements and Guiding Principles for Service Delivery found in the Protocol.
- Women are not re-victimized by the agency's complaint process. Attention will be directed toward an understanding of partner abuse as outlined in the introduction to partner abuse in this Protocol, during the development, review, revision and application of the complaint process.

Protocol Accountability Between and Among Signatory Partners

Representation in and compliance with this Protocol is voluntary; however, signatory partners formally confirm their commitment to and accountability for the implementation and monitoring of the best practice guidelines outlined in the Protocol as evidenced by the signature of the senior management staff for each organization on the Declaration of Commitment and their regular attendance at meetings as required. This commitment may include but is not necessarily limited to:

- Ensuring that services by their organization for victims and survivors of partner abuse and their children are developed and delivered in accordance with the Protocol with special attention to the Protocol Framework.
- Active participation on, and regular attendance at meetings of, the Quinte Coordinating Committee Against Violence.
- Active participation on, regular attendance at meetings pertaining to, and/or meaningful contribution to any committees mandated to monitor and or evaluate the use and application of this Protocol.

- Organizing, providing, contributing to, and/or participating in in-house training and professional development opportunities for employees in relation to partner abuse.
- Organizing, providing, contributing to, and/or participating in inter-agency, community-based training and professional development opportunities relating to partner abuse.
- Active participation in and/or meaningful contributions to any concrete collaborative strategies designed to promote and support the development and delivery of an integrated network of services to victims and survivors of partner abuse, as developed and endorsed by the QCCAV, including but not necessarily limited to collaborative service planning processes and service agreements found in this Protocol.
- Active Participation in and/or meaningful contributions to community awareness, public education, and/or prevention initiatives designed to help end violence against women and children, as developed and endorsed by the QCCAV.

Resolution of Protocol-Related Service Delivery Issues Between and Among Signatory Partners

When service providers work together to assist and protect women who have been abused, an understanding and appreciation of respective roles is required. It is from various and differing perspectives that we are able to improve services.

Working together requires good will. In order to continue to work cooperatively, all signatory partners agree that issues will be brought to the table in the spirit of problem solving rather than attaching blame.

In keeping with our shared commitment to work cooperatively and collaboratively, and in order to protect and promote quality services for victims and survivors of partner abuse in our region, the signatory partners agree to address any issues related to the service delivery in accordance with the following process:

In the event that one or more service providers become concerned about a specific issue(s) pertaining to the services provided, or not provided, to an individual client by another signatory partner agency:

- Step 1:** Frontline or direct service staff of the agency will contact each other directly to discuss the perceived problem or issue for the purpose of sharing information and seeking a mutually satisfactory resolution.
- Step 2:** In the event that the frontline staff members are not able to resolve the issue to their mutual satisfaction, they will update and involve their respective supervisors who will assume responsibility for continuing the

resolution process in accordance with their respective organizational structures and processes.

Step 3: When all processes between the two agencies have been exhausted and the issue remains, the matter will be brought to the attention of the involved agency representatives on the Protocol Committee of the QCCAV. The involved parties will attempt to address and resolve the issue with the assistance of their designated representatives on the Protocol Committee.

Step 4: In the event that either party continues to feel the issue has not be resolved to their satisfaction, they may present the relevant information to the Chair of the Protocol Committee⁷. The Chair of the Protocol Committee will make every effort to facilitate resolution of the issue.

In addition, the Chair of the Protocol Committee will determine if the specific service delivery issue represents or speaks to a larger issue pertaining to the signatory partner's failure to fulfill the commitments in this Protocol. For example, represents a pattern of behaviour that is incompatible with one or more Belief Statements or Guidelines for Service Delivery. If so, s/he is empowered to seek assistance and resolution through the Protocol Accountability Process, as outlined below.

Protocol Accountability Process

The ongoing and regular meetings of the Protocol Committee provide frequent opportunities for signatory partner agencies to identify, address and/or brainstorm strategies to address systemic issues that they believe may be negatively impacting on the network of services available to victims and survivors of partner abuse and their children; and as outlined above, a process has been developed to address and resolve issues pertaining to the delivery of services to individual clients.

The Protocol Accountability Process provides another avenue for the resolution of significant problems or concerns pertaining to protocol compliance. In the event that one or more members of the QCCAV has reason to believe that a signatory partner, either as an agency or as represented by their designate, has consistently, repeatedly and overtime failed to fulfill the commitments and agreements outline in this Protocol, and/or the Chair of the Protocol Committee has determined the same in accordance with her/his involvement with the process outlined above, s/he will:

Step 1: Bring the issue in writing describing the protocol violation and any efforts to resolve the issue to the attention of the involved Agency Representative on the Protocol Committee and advise of the intent to bring the concern to

⁷ In the event that the Chair of the Protocol Committee is involved in the issue an/or is in a position of conflict of interest in relation to these or any other accountability processes described in this Protocol, the Vice-Chair of the Protocol Committee will perform the duties of the Chair.

the attention of the Protocol Committee. Forward the letter to the attention of the Chair of the Protocol Committee, or designate, as soon as possible.

Step 2: The Chair of the Protocol Committee plus two (2) additional members of the Protocol Committee, will meet individually with the party/parties who raised the concerns and the identified agency's representative on the Protocol Committee to gather and review relevant information. In addition, this group will meet together with the involved parties to discuss, clarify and resolve the issue.

Step 3: In the event that the issue can not be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the Chair of the Protocol committee and the two additional members of the Protocol Committee will meet with the identified agency's representative on the Protocol Committee and senior management representative of this agency responsible for Protocol compliance, as per the Declaration of Commitment. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss, clarify and resolve the issue.

Step 4: In the event that the issue can not be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties as a result of Step 3, the Chair of the Protocol Committee will submit a motion in writing to the Chair of the QCCAV re: the participation and/or membership of the signatory partner. All such motions will include one or more specific, action-oriented recommendations up to and including termination of membership, if necessary. The signatory partner will receive due notice of intent to present said motion, via their representative to the Protocol Committee.

Additional Procedures Relating to Accountability and Conflict of Interest

The QCCAV has developed various strategies and processes to encourage and promote compliance with this Protocol, in accordance with our belief that Protocol compliance is integral to the implementation and maintenance of integrated network of consistent services for victims and survivors of sexual assault.

In keeping with our individual and shared commitment to Protocol compliance, signatory partners understand and accept the following responsibilities:

- Signatory partners will monitor and protect the quality of services they provide to victims and survivors of partner abuse with attention to the Belief Statements and Guiding Principles for Service Delivery outlined in this Protocol.
- Signatory partners will designate an agency representative capable of fulfilling the commitments and responsibilities of signatory partners.
- Signatory partners will ensure that their Service Descriptions accurately reflect the services and supports available at or through their organization. Any revisions

or updates resulting from legislated, mandated or voluntary changes in their programs, services, standards of practice or procedures will be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Protocol Committee as requested or as necessary.

- Signatory partners will participate in and make meaningful contributions to any Protocol review or evaluation processes, including but not necessarily limited to the formal protocol review completed approximately every four (4) years by the QCCAV. The Protocol Committee is responsible for confirming and approving the content of this Protocol.
- Signatory partners will familiarize themselves with, use, and comply with, any new or revised tools, strategies and processes relating to Protocol implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accountability developed by the Protocol Committee and/or the QCCAV.
- Signatory partners, via their representatives on the Protocol Committee and to the QCCAV, will comply with all practices pertaining to real or perceived conflicts of interest adopted by the QCCAV.