



**ALERT**  
ALBERTA LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TEAMS

# I-TRAC Newsletter

July 2011



Left to Right: Sgt. Tony Andrews, Dr. Stephen Hart Ph.D, Detective/Sergeant Glenn Sheil, Dr. Randall Kropp Ph.D., Acting Staff Sergeant Steve Burton & Cpl. Duncan Maxwell

## *Congratulations!*

We are proud to announce that two more of our team members have successfully completed the I-TRAC Understudy Program. Corporal Duncan Maxwell (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and Sergeant Tony Andrews (Lethbridge Regional Police Service).

Candidates participate in the I-TRAC Understudy Program for a period of 2 years. During this period, they are required to complete a number of readings, attend numerous mandated training courses, and complete a minimum of 20 threat assessments which are peer reviewed by mentors. The mentors work very closely with the understudies in order to ensure they have a clear understanding of theories and concepts learned as well as to review and discuss all completed threat assessments. Once this portion of the Understudy Program is complete, candidates are required to complete a test case threat assessment and undergo a Board Certification process where they are required to answer several questions from some of Canada's top experts in Threat Assessment. This year the Board was comprised of Dr. Stephen Hart Ph.D., and Dr. Randall Kropp Ph.D., developers of the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA); the Stalking and Assessment Manual (SAM), and Historical, Clinical Risk Factors (HCR-20). Also included were Detective/Sergeant Glenn Sheil from the Ontario Provincial Police Threat Assessment Unit and Acting Staff Sergeant Steve Burton, Registered Psychologist and officer in charge of the Calgary Police Service Behavioral Sciences Unit.

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Presently, there are only three threat assessment understudy programs offered in Canada. The RCMP Threat Evaluation and Management Program; the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Behavioural Sciences Unit, Threat Assessment Understudy Program; and the I-TRAC/ALERT Threat Assessment Understudy Program.

I-TRAC is the only threat assessment unit in Canada that has threat assessors from all three programs. Detective Gwyneth Amat (Calgary Police Service) and Dellrae Sharpe (Sergeant retired, Medicine Hat Police Service) were certified under the OPP Understudy Program in the spring of 2009. We are also happy to announce a new addition to our team, Graham McCartney (detective retired, Edmonton Police Service). Graham is certified in the RCMP Threat Evaluation and Management Program.

### *New Addition To The I-TRAC Team*

We are happy to announce that Dr. Liam Ennis, Ph.D., R. Psych., who has provided consulting services to I-TRAC for several years, has now accepted a part-time position as our in-house forensic psychologist. Dr. Ennis provides consulting services to a number of agencies, including the Edmonton Police Service Serious Crimes Branch, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Threat Evaluation and Management Unit, the University of Alberta: Office of the Dean of Students, and the Correctional Service of Canada. Dr. Ennis' professional expertise includes risk for violent or sexual re-offending, violence risk assessment/management, assessment/management of internal threats for workplace/domestic violence, management of high risk offenders in the community, education and training, consultation regarding policy development and much more. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Memphis in Counseling Psychology and is currently employed with the Forensic Assessment and Community Services unit of Alberta Health Services. He is also an Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta. We are extremely excited to have Dr. Ennis join our team!

### *Welcome!*

I-TRAC has a new assistant director. Mike Bartkus replaced Lee Newton as I-TRAC's Assistant Director on May 24, 2011. Mike comes to us from the Edmonton Police Service where he worked for 25 years. Before his retirement, he was the Staff Sergeant in charge of the Domestic Offender Crimes Section (DOCS). DOCS is responsible for monitoring the response to and investigation of all intimate partner domestic violence occurrences reported to the Edmonton Police Service (EPS). Mike has worked in other areas of the EPS including the Threat Assessment Unit, Robbery Section, Child Protection Section, Child at Risk Response Team (CARRT), and Patrol. Mike holds a Bachelor of Professional Arts Degree (Criminal Justice Major) from Athabasca University, a Management Development Certificate for Police Services from the University of Alberta, and a Law Enforcement Diploma from Grant MacEwan University. Welcome Mike!

### *Saunders Fatality Inquiry*

On June 10, 2011, Val Campbell, Director of I-TRAC gave testimony at the Saunders Fatality Inquiry in Drumheller, Alberta. C.S. was killed by his father in a murder suicide in 2008. Val's testimony included the role of I-TRAC in reducing serious violence and deaths in domestic violence cases. She also informed the Court on information that is available to law enforcement and the criminal justice system such as the Federal Department of Justice Criminal Harassment Handbook (2004); the Domestic Violence Handbook for Police and Crown Prosecutors in Alberta (2005); the Domestic Violence Guidelines for Police and Prosecutors in Alberta, and the extensive training that is offered by the Solicitor General and Public Security and I-TRAC, to all frontline professionals responding to incidents of domestic violence and stalking.

### *I-TRAC Opportunity*

I-TRAC currently has an opening for a civilian Threat Assessor. In this position, the qualified candidate will provide threat assessment services to police services; Crown prosecutors; child protection services; and Corrections Agencies. Threat assessment services include providing formal risk assessment reports, case management plans and recommendations to the above agencies. For the full job posting go to, [www.alert-ab.ca/publications](http://www.alert-ab.ca/publications)

# How Many Murders Have Your Children Witnessed?

Written by Detective Gwyneth Amat, I-TRAC Threat Assessor

There is a need for all of us to work together in our response to family violence. If we have chosen to work in a job where we are educating or helping children and families to be safe and healthy, we must live it in our own families.

Children today are given so many mixed messages about violence and how to treat other people. Think about the last time you watched a hockey game together with your family. Did you cheer for and celebrate your team when they got into a fight with the other team? We are raising a generation of children who see violence as entertainment, and as a way to succeed. 94% of all video games have violent themes, and the player is rewarded for killing. Research has shown that there is a link between playing violently themed video games and children having aggressive thoughts, actions and delinquency.

Experts claim that by the time children graduate from high school, they will have seen 16,000 murders on television. Our children are learning that unless there is blood, broken bones or worse, it doesn't matter.

Again, if we are going to make a difference in society, we have to live it. Robert Fulgrum said, "Don't worry that your children won't listen to you, worry that they are always watching you."

Experts also stress the impact that family violence has on children. Children and babies who are exposed to family violence can experience irreversible brain damage without intervention. Research done in Britain has shown that children exposed to family violence by ages 5 and 6 may have IQ scores 8 points lower upon entering school.



We must also talk to children at a much earlier age about violence. Peter Jaffe,<sup>1</sup> the founding director of the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, tells about having to interview an 8 year old boy after his mother had been murdered by his father. The 8 year old told Dr. Jaffe that one time a police officer had come to his school and talked to everyone about Halloween safety. The entire time the officer was talking about safety for Halloween, the boy was thinking about the violence that was happening in his home. The boy wanted to tell the police officer how scared he was about his mom, but did not. As a result, the boy told Dr. Jaffe that he feels responsible for his mother's death. If only he had said something to the police officer that day.

We all know that it wasn't this child's fault that his mother was murdered, that it wasn't his responsibility to bring the topic up, the responsibility was ours. As adults, we must talk to children about family violence.

Betsy Mcalister Groves wrote a book called *Children Who See Too Much: Lessons from the Child Witness to*

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Jaffe is the Founding Director of the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, and a member of the Clinical Adjunct Faculty in the Department of Psychology as well as a part-time Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Western Ontario. Dr. Jaffe was a member of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women and an expert witness in two Ontario inquests into domestic violence, in addition to being appointed to the Joint Committee on Domestic Violence to provide advice to the Attorney General on the implementation of jury recommendations.

*Violence Project*<sup>2</sup> and in this book she explains how children do not say anything to parents who seem too stressed. They will not raise the topic of family violence, because they don't want to stress the parent any further.

When it comes to prevention, we all must worry about those who remain silent. What is the role of bystanders? With all that we know today about the damage that is done, and the danger in not reporting violence, there is still a price for disclosure.

These issues need to be on the table, out in the open in our schools and in our homes. Children and adults don't feel safe to come forward because they still don't feel they will be supported. Martin Luther King said "it is not the actions of my enemy that concern me, but the silence of my friends."

We all have a responsibility to talk about these issues, and to support those who come forward and disclose abuse.

For more information on family violence and what you can do, visit

<http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org>

## Does Violence Affect A Child's Brain?

Dr. Bruce D. Perry, a clinician and researcher in children's mental health and the neurosciences, has written many articles on how chaos, threat, traumatic stress, abuse and neglect can have very serious effects on children. These adverse experiences alter a developing child's brain in ways that result in enduring emotional, behavioral, cognitive, social and physical problems.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Perry explains how fear and trauma influence the developing brain more so than the already developed adult brain since the vast majority of critical structure and functional organization of the brain takes place in childhood. *By the age of three the brain has reached 90% of adult size, while the body is only about 18% of adult size.* By shaping the developing brain, experiences in childhood define the adult. Simply stated, children reflect the world in which they are raised. If that world is characterized by threat, chaos, unpredictability, fear and trauma, the brain will reflect that by altering the development of the neural systems involved in the stress and fear response.



All experiences change the brain, but not all experiences have an equal impact on the brain. Because the brain is developing at such a rapid rate at the beginning stages of life, experiences during this period have much more potential to influence the brain in positive and negative ways. Children who are exposed to a stress induced environment early in life develop a sensitized stress response system that affects arousal, emotional regulation, behavioral reactivity and even cardiovascular regulation. These children are at risk for stress-induced neuropsychiatric problems later in life. Among these neuropsychiatric problems are major depression, attention

<sup>2</sup>Groves, Betsy Mcalister. (2002). *Children Who See Too Much: Lessons from the Child Witness to Violence Project*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

<sup>3</sup>Perry, Bruce D. (2006). Applying principles of Neurodevelopment to Clinical Work with Maltreated and Traumatized Children). *A Chapter from: Working with Traumatized Youth in Child Welfare*, 27-52. Retrieved from [http://childtrauma.org/images/stories/Articles/neurosequentialmodel\\_06.pdf](http://childtrauma.org/images/stories/Articles/neurosequentialmodel_06.pdf)

deficit disorder (ADHD), dissociative disorder and various developmental disorders.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Perry believes that there are a number of clear implications for a neurodevelopmental approach to the maltreated child. This type of approach uncovers the misunderstanding of resilience. We often hear people say “children are resilient,” or “they’ll get over it, they didn’t even know what was happening.” A child’s reaction to a traumatic event may seem unattached or nonreactive but this does not mean the event was not terrifying. By believing that “children will get over it” we diminish elements of their true emotional, behavioral, cognitive and social potential. Another implication for a neurodevelopmental approach is early intervention. Early intervention can ameliorate the intensity and severity of the response to trauma therefore decreasing the probability of the child developing neuropsychiatric problems later in life.<sup>5</sup> However, one of the most important factors in helping children get through a traumatic event is the availability of a healthy and responsive caretaker who can provide support and nurturance for the child following the event. The presence of a healthy caretaker can dramatically diminish the alarm response or the dissociative response in the young child.

## Domestic Violence In The News

### *New Court Option For Domestic Violence Offenders - Yellowknife, N.W.T.*

April 12, 2011 - There’s a new kind of program at the Yellowknife courthouse for offenders willing to take responsibility for acts of domestic violence.

The director of Community Justice and Community Policing, Shirley Kemes Jones, said candidates for Domestic Violence Treatment Option are at a low risk of re-offending and have been through an assessment program.

To be eligible to appear before a the DVTO court, she said an accused person has to agree to the facts of a case and take responsibility for what they’ve done.

“To address the underlying causes of the violence, there is something behind that so the whole process is sort of designed, to help that person take that responsibility and then to get the support that they need in order to address the issues so that they can live with non-violence,” she said.

She said a number of authorities get to chime in on whether a case is suitable for the DVTO court, including bail supervisors, the RCMP, the Crown and a committee.

After the accused accepts responsibility for a domestic abuse incident and has been assessed, a judge has the final say of what treatment the offender should go through.

<http://hqyellowknife.com/news/local/news/Local/11/04/12/New-court-option-for-domestic-violence-offenders>

<sup>4</sup>Perry, Bruce D. (2000). Traumatized Children: How Childhood Trauma Influences Brain Development. *The Journal of the California Alliance for the Mentally Ill*, 11(1), 48-51. Retrieved from <http://www.aacts.org/article196.htm>

<sup>5</sup>Perry, B.D., Polland, A.P., Blakley, T.L., Baker, W.L., & Vigilante, D. (1995). Childhood Trauma, the Neurobiology of Adapatation, and “Use-dependent” Development of the Brain: How “States” Become “Traits.” *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 16(4), 271-291. Retrieved from [http://www.childtrauma.org/images/stories/Articles/state\\_trait\\_95.pdf](http://www.childtrauma.org/images/stories/Articles/state_trait_95.pdf)

**Bill Would Allow Easier Gun Access For Abuse Victims - Illinois**

April 12, 2011 - Should victims of domestic violence be able to access guns more quickly? Members of the Illinois House think so, passing a measure Tuesday that would exempt them from the mandatory 72-hour waiting period to purchase a firearm.

This would apply only to those victims who have obtained an order of protection against their abusers. Steven King of the Belleville Indoor Shooting Range supports the measure. "These people have a legitimate fear that that person they had a restraining order against is going to hurt them in some way," King said. "They need to protect themselves the right way because time is of the essence."

Still some who work with victims of domestic abuse have concerns. "Our feeling is that violence is not a solution for violence," said Jessica Brandon, Executive Director of the Violence Prevention Center of Southwestern Illinois. She advocates using shelters and getting counseling over guns.

<http://www.ksdk.com/news/article/254468/3/Bill-would-allow-easier-gun-access-for-abuse-victims>

**Trucker Gets Life For Killing Wife - Red Deer, AB**

April 13, 2011 - A 50-year-old central Alberta trucker has been sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years for fatally shooting his estranged wife more than two years ago.

Justice Doreen Sulyma imposed the automatic life sentence for first-degree murder on Brian Clarence Volker on Monday Red Deer Court of Queen's Bench.

Volker was found guilty by a jury last week of killing Debi Volker, 44. He also faced five other charges. The jury had deliberated for six hours following the month-long trial before unanimously reaching its verdicts in the emotionally charged case.

Court heard Volker shot his estranged wife in the head with a .22-calibre sawed-off rifle at 3 a.m. on Feb 23, 2009, at her home in Delburne. Their three children –aged 16, 14 and 11 were in the home when their mother was slain. The couple had separated a few months prior to the killing.

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/news/Trucker+gets+life+killing+wife/4606310/story.html>

**Officials Applaud New Strangulation Laws - New Regulations Help Law Enforcement With Choking Assaults - Plattsburgh, N.Y.**

April 17, 2011 - Officials say more than 2,000 people across the state have already been arrested under new strangulation laws.

The laws - first and second-degree strangulation and criminal obstruction of breathing or blood circulation - went into effect Nov. 11, 2010, giving police and prosecutors more specific legal guidelines when dealing with choking assaults.

A recent report that reviewed the initial use of the laws shows widespread use of the new standards.

"In a mere 15 weeks, the new laws resulted in 2,003 people in New York state being charged at arrest or arraignment with a strangulation offense," Sean Byrne, acting commissioner of the State Division of Criminal Justice Services, said during a recent teleconference detailing the report.

"It clearly points out the fact that there was a critical need for this new legislation."

Byrne, who called the data startling, said it showed a "very significant response" to the new laws.

Sixty percent of charges were made in New York City, while 803 cases were filed outside the five boroughs.

Because choking can often leave no evidence of physical injury, stiffer assault charges couldn't be applied, which is why advocates pushed for special strangulation laws.

[http://pressrepublican.com/0100\\_news/x405506770/Officials-applaud-new-strangulation-laws](http://pressrepublican.com/0100_news/x405506770/Officials-applaud-new-strangulation-laws)

***New Court Integrates Domestic Violence And Family Court Cases—Toronto, ON***

*June 10, 2011* - In a first for the Canadian justice system, a new initiative in Ontario aimed at minimizing the hardships for families in crisis is merging some family court and domestic violence cases.

The integrated Domestic Violence Court will serve people who are dealing with family court issues as well as criminal charges related to domestic abuse. It will run on a pilot project basis in one Toronto courthouse with an eye to expanding in the province if it's deemed a success. In the works for a year-and-a-half, the court heard its first case Friday.

In the existing system, families dealing both with issues in family court and with a domestic violence-related charge must navigate two different processes, going at different speeds and with potential for conflicting orders.

If one spouse is charged with domestic violence and the other is seeking custody of children, for example, the two courts could be issuing conflicting orders.

Attorney General Chris Bentley said the court is largely aimed at helping women, who are overwhelmingly the victims of domestic violence, but will also benefit children and the family unit as a whole.

<http://toronto.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20110610/domestic-violence-family-court-case-110610/20110610/?hub=TorontoNewHome>

***Britain Debates Muslim Forced Marriage - Britain***

*July 7, 2011* - After years of kowtowing to multicultural sensitivities, Britain is now debating whether or not to make the act of forcing someone into marriage a specific criminal offense.

Supporters of the anti-forced marriage legislation, which may be unveiled by the British government within the next few weeks, say it would be an important first step in combating a cycle of Islamic honor-related kidnappings, sexual assaults, beating and murder that is spiraling out of control in Britain.

Recent studies show that honor-based violence (which differs from more common forms of domestic violence because it can be also be carried out by a victim's children, siblings, in-laws and extended family) is far more prevalent in Britain than originally thought.

In 2010, 1,735 victims of forced marriages sought help from the Forced Marriage Unit, a special agency established by the British government. Some of those cases involved girls as young as 13, and there were 70 instances involving women with learning or physical disabilities. Around 85 percent of the cases involved women; 15 percent involved boys or men.

<http://www.hudson-ny.org/2249/britain-forced-marriage>

***Most Women Who Seek Shelter From Partners Don't Tell Police: Stats Can - Vancouver, B.C.***

*July 8, 2011* - Most Canadian women who seek assistance at women's shelters choose not to tell police about their abuse, according to a report from Statistics Canada.

Between April 1, 2009 and March 1, 2010, 64,500 Canadian women sought and found shelter in the nearly 600 women's shelters across the country - most because of domestic abuse.

On December 15, 2010, Statistics Canada took a one-day snapshot of those shelters and found that 60 per cent of women chose not to tell police about their abuse.

"There are reasons for that," said Laura Banman, a manager at the Kelowna Women's Shelter, which is part of an organization that has been sheltering Central Okanagan women from violence, homelessness and other personal and social struggles since 1977.

She said women often attempt escape from domestic violence five or six times before they decide to end the relationship, and many fear involving the police marks the point of no return.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Most+women+seek+shelter+from+partners+tell+police+StatsCan/5070412/story.html>

# Honour Based Violence & Forced Marriage

By Dellrae Sharpe, I-TRAC Threat Assessor

On March 24, 2011 Sgt. Dellrae Sharpe (ITRAC) attended the first Canadian Workshop on Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriage (FM) for Police and Crown Prosecutors held by the Federal Justice Department in Ottawa, Ontario.

## **INFORMATION MANUAL FOR POLICE AND CROWN PROSECUTORS**

The Federal Justice Department is developing an Informational Manual to provide police and Crown prosecutors with background information on Honour-based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriage (FM). The manual is being drafted in consultation with: United Kingdom Crown (CPS), Association of Chiefs of Police of England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Home Office Forced Marriage Unit.

There is no reliable data on HBV and FM in Canada but the concept of “family honour” appears to have been a motivating factor in at least 13 reported homicide cases in Canada over the past decade. These represent a small portion (less than 1%) of total family-related homicides in Canada (1, 567 family homicides between 2000-2009). Many less serious acts of HBV that do not result in death (e.g.: assaults & threats) may go unreported. Anecdotal evidence points to the existence of forced marriages in Canada and with Canadians being taken abroad for FM purposes.

The UN Population Fund estimates there are at least 5,000 honour based killings annually around the globe. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan indicate there were 3, 276 victims of honour killings in Pakistan between 2004 and 2009. Media reports indicate that in the UK alone, up to 12 people are the victims of honour killings and at least 3, 000 young women are the victims of Forced Marriage each year. Media reports indicate that the French government estimates there are currently 70,000 young women at risk of Forced Marriage in France.

## **HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE (HBV)**

HBV is generally defined as criminal conduct which has been motivated because the offender perceived that the crime was necessary or acceptable in order to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community.

HBV stems from deeply-rooted social beliefs that the honour of the family/clan is compromised by a tarnishing of reputation on the part of a woman in the family. HBV can result from the following conduct:

- When female refuses an arranged marriage
- Chooses a relationship with a man who is unacceptable to the family
- Engages in extramarital sex, or gives birth to a child outside of marriage
- From rumours or gossip (suspected of wrongdoing (i.e.: indecently dressed or accused of being in “mixed company”)
- Or conduct that was forced (e.g.: kidnapped and/or sexually assaulted).

In such belief systems, it is considered the duty of the men, particularly the male next of kin, to safeguard their female family members. Where family/clan honour is lost, it's the duty of the men to restore this honour. This can lead to violence, FM and in extreme cases killing. In these instances the "punishment" may be viewed as the only means to avoid stigmatization of the other family members and restore the family's honour and position in the community. In some cases the women may be urged or forced to commit suicide. Women and girls are predominantly, although not exclusively the victims of HBV. Men and boys may also become victims, particularly if they are accused and/or suspected of bringing a woman's reputation into disrepute. The offenders are generally male family members: husbands, fathers, brothers or uncles. Family conferences may be held to determine who will carry out the violence, and younger males may be chosen because they may be more likely to receive a lower sentence if found guilty of an offense.

### **FORCED MARRIAGE (FM)**

Forced marriage (FM) is generally defined as a marriage that takes place without the consent of one or both individuals.

FM is condemned by every major religion. It is a practice related to customary traditions. Most incidents of FM could be categorized as related to family honour. A refusal to accept an arranged marriage could result in a family "losing face" in the eyes of their community and result in violence. Marriages may also be forced upon victims of sexual assault who must marry the offender to ensure they do not make their siblings unmarriageable. Other incidents of FM may be motivated by factors unrelated to family honour such as financial (dowry-related) or immigration concerns. Once forcibly married, there is a heightened risk of sexual assault and physical violence. Honour crimes and honour killings can also occur following a forced marriage if one of the partners, usually the woman, is accused of inappropriate behavior or adultery. A forced marriage can also lead to suicide.



*In July 2003, seventeen-year-old Amandeep Atwal was stabbed to death by her father. Amandeep had been dating a boy that her parents did not approve of.*

Both males and females can be subject to a forced marriage and many are minors. FM commonly occurs when the family takes their son or daughter back to their native country, possibly under false pretenses. Once back in their native country, he/she is forced to wed a spouse that the parents have chosen. There are a number of key motives for forced marriages that include:

- Controlling unwanted behaviour/sexuality (gay/promiscuity etc.)
- Controlling of alcohol/drug use; wearing make-up, behaving in a "westernized manner"
- Preventing unsuitable relationships (outside cultural, ethnic or religious groups)
- Protecting family honour/cultural ideals/religious beliefs
- Responding to peer group or family pressure
- Attempting to strengthen family links
- Financial gain, wealth remain in family, obtains property
- Ensuring care of a child/adult with special needs is taken care after parents die or physical unable to care for.
- Assistance with citizenship/residency status in country.

To read the full report, go to [www.alert-ab.ca/publications](http://www.alert-ab.ca/publications)

### *Call For Abstracts*

The Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse is joining together for a conference in Calgary on May 6– 9, 2012. If you are interested in submitting an abstract, go to:

<http://issuu.com/csicainfo.com/docs/callforabstracts2012conference?viewMode=magazine>