

60 Attend Workshop On Sexual Violence

by Dawn Currie

Approximately 60 people participated in the one-day workshop for service providers, Working with Survivors of Sexual Violence. The workshop took place last Friday at St. James United Church Hall.

Participants included service providers from the Antigonish and area community along with survivors of sexual violence and members of the general public.

Giving the keynote address was Marjorie MacDonald, MSW, from Drug Dependency Services in Sydney. She began her address, pointing out, "All of us are diminished by violence. Especially sexual violence." She noted that people involved in working with survivors of sexual violence, those working to address sexual violence, as well as those healing from sexual violence are involved in doing "liberation work." "They are liberating people as well as liberating society," she said.

Speaking to the service providers about sexual violence and how to work sensitively and effectively with survivors, she stressed that many women and children experience violence as a daily occurrence.

Focusing the topic close to home, the workshop participants discussed what steps the Antigonish community can take to address sexual violence. These included:

- public forums to increase community awareness about sexual violence;
- accessible, affordable services for survivors of sexual violence;
- more coordination among service providers;
- mandated feminist, sexual assault workshops for all service providers;
- women-only programs in all agencies, schools and institutions that work with survivors of sexual violence;
- municipal subsidies for survivors who cannot afford counselling;
- clergy recognition of the prevalence of sexual violence; and
- treatment programs for perpetrators of sexual violence.



TAKING PART in last Friday's workshop, Working with Survivors of Sexual Violence, held at St. James United Church hall were: committee member Catherine Mae MacDonald (left); Isabel Forsyth of Mental Health; keynote speaker Marjorie MacDonald of Drug Dependency in Sydney; Jean Collins of Mental Health; Vangie Babin of the Antigonish Women's Resource Center; therapist Shirley Burkett; Neld Armour of Drug Dependency Antigonish; and committee member Joan Randall.