

Public invited to take part in research

The Naomi Society for Victims of Family Violence and the Antigonish Women's Resource Center are now entering the second phase of a research project entitled, "Sibling Violence: A Family Secret."

A needs assessment questionnaire has been distributed to high school students at East Antigonish Academy and Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School, and to parents of two or more adolescent children in Antigonish town and county. The project coordinator is currently looking for interested parents and adolescents to take part in focus group discussions on sibling violence. The goal of the research is to establish a definition and

analysis of sibling violence, overview the types of sibling violence occurring in Antigonish families, and assess the effects of sibling violence on family members.

Violence between siblings is often referred to as the most prevalent form of family violence, yet it has not been awarded the attention this title deserves. A National Survey revealed that 82 percent of children between the ages of three to 17 years, residing in the United States, and living at home, engaged in at least one violent act toward another sibling over the course of a year. Sibling violence is not recognized or defined by courts, child protection services, clinicians or families. The

public, researchers, and social and public policy agencies have also overlooked the serious nature of sibling abuse. This is for the most part attributable to the belief that violence between siblings and sibling rivalry are common, considered to be normal, an "inevitable part of growing up," and are therefore often ignored by parents. The phenomenon is also minimized and ignored as a result of social norms which encourage expressions of aggression and antagonism between brothers and sisters.

While the issue of sibling violence may appear to be of trivial concern to most, it is nonetheless a form of violence which has a lasting impact on

individuals directly involved and the family as a whole. Research on the issue is crucial to the development of community based supports for those who need help in dealing with this wide spread form of family violence. Naomi Society and Antigonish Women's Resource Center invite adolescents with one or more siblings, and parents of two or more adolescent children to participate in this research project.

For further inquiries, contact Alicia at Naomi Society, 863-3807, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

The Casket
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