THE TOPSHEE NEWS

The official newsletter of the 10th annual Topshee Memorial Conference — June, 1993

Bewitched, Battered and Bewildered: In the war against women, "because" is no answer to the question "why?"

THE STATISTICS JAN Heney used in her keynote address to the 10th annual Topshee Memorial Conference are horrifying, even if you have heard them many times before.

Outlining the realities and root causes of violence against women, Heney, a social worker who works with prisoners at the Kingston penitentiary for women, said the number of women murdered in Canada rose each year between 1989 and 1991 — from 89, to 187, to 270 (Editor's Note: If the trend holds, roughly 450 Canadian women will be murdered in 1993).

Heney said a woman is sexually assaulted somewhere in Canada every six minutes, and is forced into sexual intercourse every 17 minutes (Editor's Note: 370 women will have been sexually assaulted and 130 raped, somewhere in Canada, during the course of this conference).

Heney said that in 1921 women earned 61 per cent of what men earned. Seventy years later they earned 65 per cent of what men earn (Editor's Note: At this rate, wage parity can be forecast for either the late 27th or the early 28th century).

Statistically, a woman's risk of suffering physical, sexual and/or economic violence increase significantly if she is an Aboriginal woman, a woman of colour, disabled, or older.

Yet society and many of the individuals who make up society are unable to admit there is a problem, Heney said. Like an abused child who survives overwhelming sexual violence by locking the experience away from conscious awareness, society and its individuals and institutions deny the existence of the problem.

The Wolf of the Native healing cards asks why, seeks answers, and brings them back to the clan so that it can heal. The Wolf asks: why is the issue of violence against women so difficult for society to address.

Heney said the denials serve a purpose. Where a child or woman has been abused by a family member, families will blame the victim — it's her fault because she is messed up, experiencing emotional difficulties, exaggerating — rather than the abuser.

"We can still love a family member experiencing emotional difficulties...we cannot do this as easily with someone we have acknowledged is a rapist or a sexual abuser or a batterer," Heney said. "The denial serves to keep the

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Jan Heney, keynote speaker: "If we can't or aren't willing to protect women...what chance do we have of dealing with issues of race, or class, or sexual orientation?"

Saturday a.m. Workshops

Perpetuators of Violence

Institutional Violence

Presenter: Elizabeth Graham
Facilitator: Wayne Edgar

Major Issues

- in First Nations communities there is a need for healing centres (space and time) to deal with the effects of violence; resources are scarce and unavailable
- all members of aboriginal communities (men, women and children) need to be involved in the process
- the response of First Nations people to violence provides an example of how a culture can respond to total and brutal institutional violence
- all participants agreed there was much to learn from First Nations values, rituals and approaches to this and other issues.

Presenter: Shelly Finson
Facilitator: Sylvia Parris

Major Issues

- language and symbols support the tolerance (of violence)

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Keynote cont'd...

family system as it stands intact, or at least with the possibility of having that same intactness again in the future.

"Through this denial, the crime becomes ignored and is left unaddressed."

The denial operates at a broader level, too. If women complain against violence they may be denied as "...just emotionally unstable, or hysterical, or neurotic, or want too much (so) we can keep the existing social structure intact and we won't have to feel uncomfortable or look at our own behaviour."

Heney identified a variety of denial mechanisms.

"When I speak of violence against women, I have often been accused of hating men," she said. "This seems very odd to me. I speak about women being murdered, beaten and sexually assaulted and the response is I hate men? Why is the response not 'if so many women are being hurt, there must be a lot of woman-hating in this society'?"

Accusing feminists who speak against violence of wanting to be men themselves, or of being lesbians, is similarly a diversionary tactic, aimed at drawing attention away from the real issue, she said.

"If we listen and accept what women are telling us we will come face to face with the horror that many women experience in our society and this would threaten our very view of the world. It's much easier to discredit the victim and try to silence those that speak out."

Breaking out of the denial is the first step to identifying and changing the structures that create the problem, Heney said.

The Eagle soars and observes the over all pattern of life. The Eagle sees that the source of oppression does not originate with the individual.

Heney said the feminist analysis is not concerned with individual oppressors, but with the social structure we are born into and with the educational, family, religious and information systems that reinforce it.

Society is ordered in a hierarchy, Heney said, and the individual's status within the hierarchy determines her or his rewards. In our society male is best — rewarded with higher wages, greater power — and "white male is even better." Females are low on the hierarchy, and if they are of colour or Native, they are even lower.

For males to assume their place in the hierarchy — or patriarchy — they must behave as men do. If they are strong, aggressive, if they lead and protect, are ambitious, logical and unemotional, they are rewarded.

Traits attributed to females — passiveness, dependency, coyness, sexual passivity — must therefore be repressed or status in the patriarchy is threatened.

Heney said boys cannot be expected to repress all the "girlness" in them and still value women. Women cannot be expected to learn that boys have higher status than girls, and still value themselves.

"Differences, where they exist, are not the problem," Heney said. "But any time (the differences are) differently valued (sic) — qualities are ascribed to different genders, different classes, different races, different religions, different sexual orientations — we set up a hierarchy based on 'better than, more valuable, higher in status.' And the ones higher in status will receive more protection, more perks, more legitimacy."

Men are raised in the expectation that if they maintain their dominant status, women will meet their emotional and sexual needs, be passive, say no when they mean yes. The members of the patriarchy can be expected to defend their status, and to reflect the values that support it. Heney said research shows little qualitative difference between men known to have abused women, and men in general. In one study, one-third to one-half of male university students indicate they are likely to rape a woman if they are certain they can get away with it. Some men are simply more likely to be abusers than others.

The Antelope teaches that action is the essence of living.

Acting against violence against women is not the exclusive role of women, said Heney, and it does not focus on individual oppressors. It is a social issue. It means stepping out from behind a protective and comfortable shield of denial.

"Feminism is about deconstructing the hierarchies that place one gender, one race, one class, one sexual orientation at the top...through breaking our denial we can identify and deal with the structures that support and promote violence against women.

"In fact, our only hope lies in doing precisely this, for if we can't or aren't willing to protect women...what chance do we have of dealing with issues of race, or class, or alternative sexual orientations.

"Feminism is about hope, healing, and creating a future where all our children can inherit a world which holds and cherishes humanity above gender, or race, or religion, or sexual orientation."

Stray Fact: "When women do enter non-traditional fields—whether blue-collar or professional—they may face harassment from hostile male co-workers. Over 90 per cent of women who responded to a Women in Trades survey said they had been sexually harassed."
Canadian Advisory Council
on the Status of Women

The following titles are available from Red Herring Co-op Books, 1555 Granville, Halifax — (902)422-5987:

- The Montreal Massacre, by Louise Malette & Marie Chalouh
- Getting Free — You Can End Abuse and Take Back Your Life, by Ginny Ni Carthy
- Femicide — The Politics of Women Killing, by Jill Radford & Diana E.H. Russell
- Rape and Representation, by Lynn A. Higgins & Brenda R. Silver
- Violence Against Wives, by R. Emerson Dobash

Pertpetuators cont'd...

continued from page one

- denial of supports such as child care
- ideology of systems e.g. role of women in the home
- increasing violence among children
- the institution of family perpetuates violence
- leadership, authority, power

Areas of Consensus

- dealing with poor pay as abuse
- system benefits from things as they are
- social system abuses through structure, red tape
- system devalues women
- media perpetuate violence
- need for more dialogue

Areas of Lack of Consensus

- do not understand men's direction/input

Presenter: Shelly Finson
Facilitator: Sylvia Parris

Major Issues:

- seeing society as it is rather than as a collection of people
- need to dismantle hierarchies
- perception of leadership needs to change
- lack of gender equality
- our use of language to sustain the natural order (status quo)
- violence is getting worse
- racial hierarchy — separate race and gender?

Areas of Consensus

- need for continued education
- people do not want to defer power or share power
- need to be accountable in a circular shared fashion
- need to feel role and input are valid
- need to question and feel okay about doing that
- we put too much stock in the need to forgive
- those in privilege need to give up power

Areas of Lack of Consensus

- it is too difficult to overcome in one lifetime

Workplace Violence

Presenter: Heather Buchanan
Facilitator: Anne Betts

Major Issues

The many faces of workplace violence are:

- pay inequity
- harassment
- sexual harassment
- direct violence
- abusive comments from clients
- differential treatment between women and men
- sexist put downs
- unions as perpetuators of male and systemic violence
- old boys' network
- non-inclusive language
- job ghettos

Areas of Consensus

- all of the above
- the patriarchal system taught us the lessons well and continues to reinforce the power imbalance between men and women
- harassment is pervasive
- harassment divides workers and union members
- working environment is changing and there is resistance in the form of backlash
- harassment is about power and control

Presenter: Brenda Walker
Facilitator: Paulette Sadoway

Major Issues

- effect of government policies (free trade) on workplaces — increase in economic pressure leads to violence
- tendency of men to be "rank oriented"
- children are taught to be violent
- violence is not only a political issue but a personal issue

Areas of Consensus

- hierarchy is institutionalized through titles
- violence is an accepted way of dealing with frustration
- men have to see violence as their problem and deal with it

Areas of Lack of Consensus

- a very cohesive group. If anything there was a difference of opinion on the extent we should address violence as a political vs a personal issue, although everyone agreed that politics was important

Presenter: Brenda Walker
Facilitator: Paulette Sadoway

Major Issues

- lack of willingness on the part of female workers to report incidences of violence in the workplace
- problem with lack of youth participation in this conference — why aren't they here with a format designed for youth?

Areas of Consensus

- society is sick
- media plays a major role in perpetuating and encouraging violence

Areas of Lack of Consensus

- fighting violence is the personal responsibility of the victim versus a societal/organizational problem to be solved collectively
- legislation vs education to deal with the problem

Economic Violence

Presenter: Maureen MacDonald
Facilitator: Trudy Watts

Major Issues

- women can't get credit
- women as part-time workers don't get benefits or job security
- in our economic structure wealth is still being generated but is accumulating in fewer people's hands; economy only values profit, other values are needed; technology is replacing workers; male unemployment directly affects female partners.
- women who are sexually harassed at work and leave have trouble getting UI; females often forced to become dependent on the state which then takes an oppressive watchdog role e.g. "no men in the house" etc.
- women have double duty, work outside and do housework
- reality of rural women not reflected in statistics which are urban based; have fewer economic choices
- each woman's context has to be looked at individually — extent of economic violence differs according to race, etc.
- women aren't represented in directorships of co-ops/credit unions
- women are made to feel they are lucky to get a job therefore, are unable to speak out about sexism

Areas of Consensus

- women end up with financial and other responsibilities for children, therefore they receive more social services; easier to see who is in need of social services when we imagine removing them, e.g. medicare
- myth perpetuated that majority of women haven't always worked outside the home
- working class women have always worked outside home; men often control pay cheque and don't recognize the real value of women at home.
- multinationals control the economy — we have less control with agendas that give more control to multinationals via NAFTA; we all will suffer but women and children will suffer most.
- education system perpetuates sexism and violence. Women who speak out fear that their husband's status will be affected
- history has not accurately represented women's role in workplace

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Pertpetuators cont'd...

- economics designed for profit of multinationals
- we don't have access to a popular understanding, analysis of "economics" so we can't argue from an informed position
- wealth is not being distributed, government is rewarding the rich by promoting RRSPs and reducing Canada Pension, promoting the ethic that you are to blame if you haven't accumulated wealth

Areas of Lack of Consensus

- some felt we are hung up on language
- debate over whether various forms of economic violence are deliberate or just insensitive
- where and when it's appropriate for women and men to work together
- is it possible to make structural change by working from within system?

Presenter: Anne Bishop
Facilitator: Katherine Reed

Major Issues

- women's work is unpaid and under paid
- disadvantaged groups need alliances with advantaged
- wife abuse related to unemployment/ poverty, why do we let the government get away with this?

Areas of Consensus

- social policy re social assistance illogical, abusive
- pay equity — male and female must fight for it
- taxation unfair re maintenance payments and females don't get the money
- females work in home, child care, elderly, sick not valued
- females overworked
- females need men's help and involvement
- poverty and unemployment don't cause spousal violence, otherwise women would be beating men

Areas of Lack of Consensus

- attack problem from one area versus multifaceted approach

Presenter: Anne Bishop
Facilitator: Katherine Reed

Major Issues

- why are women so poor and efforts to rectify this have not made substantive change?
- women not involved in decision making
- division among people and between male and female — no support
- isolation — single moms, poor people isolated
- lack of male involvement in activism; teach each other — ask not what your feminist can do for you, but what you can do for your feminist

Areas of Consensus

- women are much poorer than men generally
- women not in powerful positions
- religion continues sexism in some ways
- the media presents dominant view, i.e. male
- females are not challenging the anti-family, anti-male accusation levelled at feminists
- abusive males should be removed from home, not women and their children

Areas of Lack of Consensus

- does unemployment affect levels of violence against women? why? why not?
- there is a need for the sexes to work together vs. male and female need to talk in gender specific groups
- males should teach people about their issues

Presenter: Maureen MacDonald
Facilitator: Trudy Watts

Major Issues

- women viewed as supports for men; the economic system is created and conceptualized by white men with money
- very structure of language/concepts represent a male viewpoint
- female's contributions — household, voluntary and informal economy — not included
- women on social assistance are particularly vulnerable — fear of losing their assistance if they speak out; they are put at risk when there is no transportation dollars attached to training programs and they have no car
- judgements/double standards re "women should be at home looking after kids" and "why don't you get a job and get off welfare?"
- working poor don't have enough money

Thanks

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Local Unions
Labour Canada, Atlantic Region
Labour Canada, Women's Bureau
Co-op Atlantic
Credit Union Central of Nova Scotia
Credit Union Central of Prince Edward Island
Various contributors, including an anonymous individual from Montreal who this year donated $4,000.

Pertpetuators cont'd...

to pay for necessities and this leads to violence
- men working away means that women are left with total responsibility for everything at home
- men control money in household
- low income women not well represented in feminist movement
- church excludes women from leadership roles

Areas of Consensus
- degradation of people who have to use food banks
- we feel a powerlessness when it comes to "the economy"
- focus for change has to come through collective action
- patronage excludes females and others with abilities and maintains status quo which is patriarchy
- historically women have been seen as men's property

Areas of Lack of Consensus
- role of individual workers in systems like social services; some thought workers too are powerless in system; others felt workers should take responsibility via union organizing to change values, etc.
- some people thought capitalism was the root cause, not patriarchy
- whether or not it is patronizing to use language like "doing something for" someone
- are food banks also as patronizing or necessary?
- unions are only working for better wages, benefits — not working on violence and other patriarchy changes

Direct Violence

Presenter: Sr. Cecile Renault
Facilitator: Marion Jefferies

Major Issues
- society's acceptance of violence reflected in the media, entertainment
- lack of awareness of violence e.g. perception of what is violence
- power of different forms of education to change this

Areas of Consensus
- a hierarchy exists
- need for respect for all people
- need for prevention of violence
- an involvement of community in awareness, lobbying, changes in laws, and broad based approach

Areas of Lack of Consensus
- judicial system — some wanted stiffer penalties, others didn't trust system

Presenter: Bonnie Nicholson
Facilitator: Sr Peggy Butts

Major Issues
- attitudes in public at large are from the past
- attitudes of police
- attitudes of courts and judges
- failure to recognize the symptoms and to realize people don't change automatically

Areas of Consensus
- need changes especially in education of young
- need changes in laws and courts
- need changes in welfare system and in financial situation for women who leave
- influence of video games and television
- more training for police on this issue

Presenter: Bonnie Nicholson
Facilitator: Sr Peggy Butts

Major Issues
- most common abuse is emotional, begins with words
- the burden of history and the laws of earlier times
- the way assault was and is handled in family court
- the negative attitude of police and judges
- women eroding the self-esteem of other women

Areas of Consensus
- education is the key to changing attitudes including the attitudes of women toward women
- failure to recognize the symptoms and tendency to believe people will change automatically
- change in laws and in training of police and judges; women don't make the laws!

Areas of Lack of Consensus
- difference of opinion on whether children will follow what they see in their homes

Presenter: Karen O'Hara
Facilitator: Peggy Mahon

Major Issues
- discussed different forms of direct violence— physical, sexual, emotional
- why do men abuse— because of personal issues such as jealousy and insecurity; because of larger social factors such as men having power and control i.e. traditional women are considered chattel or property
- women's work is devalued in society
- men may have observed violence in their own families— their father abused their mother and society tolerates abuse of women
- psychological effects of abuse on women — feel guilty, devalued, depersonalized, ashamed, feel like a failure, try harder, isolated, alone, depressed and angry, full of fear
- men have guilt (short lived) feel powerful, in control, head of family, justified, access to resources, believes that she can't think for herself
- messages from society: Man — all right for a man to use force, and not express vulnerable emotions; double standards about sexuality i.e. he has "proved himself" Woman— it is all right to be abused, to be economically dependent, to nurture the family
- double standards about sexual partners i.e. she's a whore

Presenter: Mary DeWolfe
Facilitator: Maureen Edgett

Major Issues
- media
- pornography
- as a society we allow violence
- fear
- power
- control
- acting as society's "male"

Areas of Lack of Consensus
- male insensitivity, bullying
- men don't know any other way

Presenter: Karen O'Hara, Ian Austen
Facilitator: Peggy Mahon

Major Issues
- discussed specific types of abuse; physical, sexual, emotional and the psychological effects of violence
- women have low self-esteem, are terrified, powerless, guilty, feel they don't deserve better, need to manage, feel inadequate, anxious, depressed and angry
- men feel powerful that they are in control, justified, angry, obsessive, jealous/envious
- men also have low self-esteem, feel guilty, blame women and hate women
- institutions reinforce this — women go to doctors because they are anxious or depressed and the doctor gives them a "pill" which does not address the problem; woman becomes tranquillized and further abused by the system. Similarly the man's behaviour is sanctioned by the system

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Areas of Consensus
- only through this generation has the issue of violence come forward through the efforts of women
- abuse of women has been condoned through the millennia
- need to include men in the issue; it is a social problem
- need to get men involved in solutions
- patriarchy is prime cause of violence

Presenter: Mary DeWolfe
Facilitator: Maureen Edgett

Major Issues:
- the need to find root cause — what supports the abuse of power and control
- we must break the silence
- institutionalized systemic violence is perpetuated by a reluctant judicial system
- children must be educated to other issues
- self-esteem is lacking in both genders
- inequality in personal relationships leads to confrontation

A World Without Violence?

Setting the Stage for the Visioning Process

TO BEGIN THE afternoon session, three panellists were asked to help participants move from an analysis of why violence against women exists to examining what the world would look like if we got rid of the causes of violence discussed in the earlier small group sessions.

Wilf Bean, a lecturer at the Coady International Institute in Antigonish, directed his remarks specifically to the men attending the conference.

He said their first task as men is to open their eyes and ears, to listen, to learn, to study, and to see the depths of the problem of violence and their role in perpetuating its existence. Men must recognize they are part of a patriarchal society, a society in which they benefit unequally, and enjoy more power and privileges than women. Men must see that violence against women is not an individual problem performed by deviants, but a systemic social problem which influences attitudes and shapes behaviour.

The next task, Bean said, is for men to join together in the struggle to find a new definition and understanding of masculinity that is not patriarchal. Often, he said, the terms have been lumped together. Men need to develop the feminine side of their personalities, to learn how to share their emotions and improve their relational skills. "This is work we as men need to do together; women can't do this work for us," he said.

Although there are no clear models for this new definition of masculinity, Bean felt the following dimensions should be included:

- it must be non-violent
- it must be non-dominating
- there should be a diversity of options.

He concluded by saying that it is time for men to do more than just talk about putting an end to violence. "We need to live it, to feel it, as well develop our theories about it."

The next panellist, Canadian Labour Congress vice-president Lynn Jones, began with a personal story about the acceptability of violence in our society. In the Truro neighbourhood where she grew up, on weekends children would take bets on the "action for the weekend," i.e. which couple would get into a fight, which mom would get beaten, to what extent, and how the police would handle the situation. The next day, the women in the community would gather at the home of the victim and offer sympathy and help her clean her wounds.

We also need to consider the question of violence and race and be aware that some segments of society are even further removed from power than others.

Jones then shared some of the stories she heard in the small groups where people spoke about incidents of violence they have been touched by or witnessed: in the home, in the workplace, on the street.

Violence, she said, is about power and can never be justified. This abuse has far reaching personal and societal effects. We need to move into a win-win situation, to unlearn our violent behaviours.

We also need to consider the question of violence and race and be aware that some segments of society are even further removed from power than others.

The final speaker, Judy Hughes, who has 20 years of experience in the anti-violence movement, challenged the participants to move forward honestly in their discussions and to break through the pain this issue creates. She said the conference is an opportunity for admission, ownership and reality checks, but what she heard in the small groups indicated people were angry, complacent and trying to keep to a safe position.

"It is our responsibility to get something done," Hughes said. "Enough women have died, been raped, beaten, burned and abused. We must stop intellectualizing and move into action."

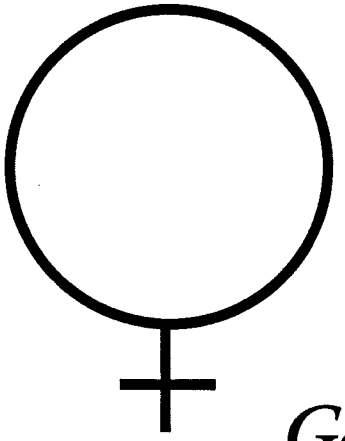
The starting point, according to Hughes, is for each of us to face our own personal denial and to be honest with ourselves about our silence in the face of violence.

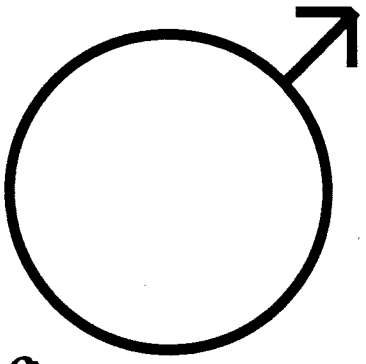
"One in six women in this room has been abused; one in six men in this room caused that abuse. The rest of us sat back in silence. That silence," she said, "is permission. It is up to all of us to say something."

Hughes ended by encouraging participants to speak at the gut level about their personal lives, to recognize how each of us contributes to the problem. "This must be done before we can create a vision of a world without violence and before we develop strategies for action."

The floor was then open to questions from the audience.

Participants commented on the lack of signs directed at men to stop their violent behaviour (such as WALK WOMEN HOME GENTLY and DON'T RAPE WOMEN); the marginalization of the victims of violence; and the need for people to take responsibility for educating themselves about the issues. The lack of attention paid to racism as a form of violence was also raised. This prompted Jones to challenge the small groups to be sure to include all women in their future discussions, noting that "a hurt for one, is a hurt for all."





Gender Specifics

Moving from an analysis of the problem to a discussion of alternatives, participants were asked to break into gender specific groups to envision what a world without violence against women would look like.

What the Women Said

Elements of Vision

ECONOMIC
- higher minimum wage
- teach our children myths of materialism
- close wage gap between professionals and others
- access to all jobs, all levels
- implement affirmative action programs
- enforce child support
- make food banks unnecessary
- sisterhood/solidarity
- no more sexual harassment
- more women worker co-ops, pay equity and affordable, quality daycare
- better paid part-time work
- equal partnership with men in marriage, motherhood and relationships
- funding for shelters
- better portrayal of women in media
- real choices
- a redistribution of wealth
- money or finance would be divorced from work
- we would change the concept of work and respect need
- women would use their power as consumers
- we need a gender neutral way of speaking
- need access to systems that respect the needs of women and children
- equity within the banking system
- all work must be valued and useful; respectful workplace

SOCIAL
- complete elimination of pornography
- must unlearn old attitudes
- equal and responsible healthcare
- women's work/contributions valued
- no discrimination against anyone
- no more stereotyping
- child bearing must have value

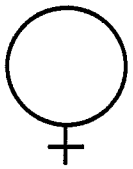
What the Men Said

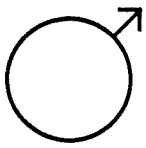
Elements of Vision

ECONOMIC
- pay and employment equity for all disadvantaged groups including women, aboriginals, the disabled, etc.
- to effect this change, men will need to make less money, receive a smaller percentage of the good jobs
- greater income for women means more economic independence, less stress on the family
- reduction in cost of support systems for victims of violence: police, transition houses, courts, hospitals, mental health centres, etc. would mean more money is available for education and social programs
- women are encouraged to study science, engineering, business administration, political science
- women who stay at home for childrearing purposes receive financial and social recognition
- less competition, more co-operation between men and women results in a better world in which to live.

SOCIAL
- greater equality; men and women are seen as equal partners who complement, not compete with one another
- a happy, safe community
- less fear, less pressure
- increased self-esteem
- women are free to contribute more effectively to society
- redistribution of resources and responsibilities
- restructuring of power
- removal of sexist terms in language
- change in attitudes
- elimination of pornography and how it depicts women

POLITICAL
- greater input from women in the decision-making process and in positions of power
- a 50/50 split of political seats
- unity
- use of gender inclusive language such as humankind





- healthy self-esteem for all
- change language within patriarchy which is a barrier to women's self expression, i.e. men's communication being more "legitimate"
- social justice for all
- respect for women by men and by women
- choices
- trust
- safety, freedom, respect, real laughter, hope
- family life skills in an education system that respects all women
- living without fear
- men and community must take equal responsibility for children and home
- encourage socialization of both men and women on women's issues
- value the way women do things, learn each other's values and listen to each other
- turn messages around — don't rape
- both racism and sexism are violence
- concrete changes to education system

POLITICAL

- gender parity in legislatures
- accountability of leaders
- boards not comprised of peers to look into issues re abuse (i.e medical board looking into allegations re doctors)
- we must change the axis of political power
- we must work toward a guaranteed annual income
- change mindsets of government to be "people serving"
- zero tolerance of crimes against women and children
- no more John Crosbies
- representation by visible minorities
- proper legislation for the protection of women and children
- no violence as a means of solving conflict
- we want our needs met; we have a creation given right to this
- we should share power, share responsibility
- one token woman is not enough; women need more political role models; also financial support as political candidates
- voice, equality, trust
- free and equal access to education
- equal representation and decision making power
- abolition of the Senate
- system disconnected from finance
- anti-racist/sexist legislation
- unions must offer training for women to move into leadership
- funding for treatment of perpetrators
- more women in politics, more leaders consider women as authorities and leaders
- value women, their life experiences and give them credibility
- have successful role models

SPIRITUAL

- change the Old Testament mentality of angry God to a message of a loving God
- "Christianize" Christianity
- people are able people to deal with other issues
- the federal and provincial governments represent the entire population, not just a privileged minority
- affirmative action programs
- corporate power is confronted and defeated

SPIRITUAL

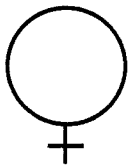
- less guilt
- greater self-esteem
- more love for fellow person
- more sharing among men and warmth between them
- a close relationship with God
- more peace and harmony
- follow the Golden Rule; respect one another

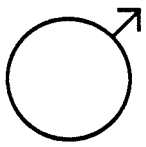
BARRIERS

- lack of public education and awareness about the problem
- indifference, tolerance and acceptance of the problem
- men don't see violence against women as a critical issue yet; men are not hurting enough
- too much power in the hands of too few
- rules which maintain status quo in society
- practices such as the purchase of war toys, violence in sports, etc.
- current attitudes, ignorance
- lack of communication, lack of listening
- pressure from peers
- the practice of labelling
- emphasis on the self (ego)
- men's fear of losing status
- fear of change, fear of the unknown; to eliminate violence will mean a different society in which men's roles will change and result in a loss of power
- the economy needs to be turned around to achieve the vision
- the causes of violence against women are deep, culturally based and linked to other forms of oppression — race, class, etc. — but are also unique and pervasive; pervasiveness should not be used as an excuse for inaction; men can't avoid their personal responsibility
- among men, the peer pressure for conformity begins at an early age and it can be hard to wreak change in this cultural misogyny which starts in the schoolyard and in the home
- lack of commitment to change
- lack of personal control against institutional violence
- it will take a revolution to achieve equality for women

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- men need to take the opportunity to find space for themselves as men to define their own reality
- men need to be willing to change, recognize problems and to do what they can in their individual economic, political, social and spiritual environments; violence should not be tolerated in any form
- education in the broad sense and networking, perhaps through kitchen meetings, needs to take place which involves men and women first within their own families
- need to be willing to confront situations when we see them and





- church should be a communion of persons with women participating in all functions of church
- need a "creation spirituality", i.e planet friendly
- feminine theology must be fully accepted
- women priests
- respect for people and the earth
- both gendered god/goddess
- freedom to live and determine own religion; living out our full potential
- women should be church leaders
- trust, peace, love, togetherness, connectedness, understanding, non-judgmental
- women would discuss this with other women and we would have vehicles for women and spirituality — would validate women's spirituality
- should be based on self-esteem and connected with the earth
- reflect our economic, social and political visions
- freedom from religious dogma
- we need a church that is caring, nurturing, accepting, healing
- we must work against materialism and greed

Onbe group addressed safety as an issue among and between women and in the larger world. Safety for women—being safe economically, socially, politically and spiritually is basic to creating an alternative to patriarchy. Women didn't feel safe to speak out in an uricensored way during the first part of the conference.

Safety is connected to freedom and freedom for women in the largest sense of the world—economic, political, social and spiritual—is our vision of our participation in a non-patriarchical world.

"We want the freedom to be honest, to talk about the realities of our lives without fear of retribution, firing, murder, ridicule, dismissal, being ignored and discounted. We need to be heard among ourselves and with men.

"We want to choose how we live our lives, full participation in society, able to speak, act, walk, think, love freely, on our own terms.

"We are enraged that we do not feel safe in our world. We are angry that we do not feel safe at Topshee, that we are in a time of backlash, an undeclared war against women that keeps us isolated from each other.

"We talked about wellness, in a non-patriarchical world women would be socially, economically, spiritually and politically well. We are maimed at birth in this society and taught to pretend we are well. We want the right to nurture and look after ourselves, to incorporate our unique women's rhythmns into our world, our bleeding, our menopause, our birthing, our hot flashes.

"We want to heal our woundedness and to impart the resulting self-care and self-esteem to our children and to teach them to care for and value themselves as part of the life of the planet.

"Our spirituality, our wellness of spirit, is the light filling our bodies and minds directing us what, how and why to be/act in the world and in ourselves. Our spirituality is easily fragmented in

know how to handle them

- need to get involved at the community level; risks need to be taken in key sectors (schools, unions, co-ops) by "conscious" men to advocate for zero tolerance toward violence
- men need to learn how to appropriately support women in their efforts
- a conference for men only should be held (some differences of opinion as to whether this would work or not)
- don't get discouraged, don't give up

One group did not focus on vision, but rather took the opportunity to talk among themselves about their reactions to the conference so far. Their thoughts included:

- feeling uncomfortable that some of them were leading a life without violence, but were now being challenged to go beyond that to something else; all recognized the need to do more;
- some felt that women need to tell men what to do, while others felt that men need to determine what to do;
- some felt uncomfortable being separated from the women; they do not want a "we/they" situation to arise;
- there were varying levels of acceptance of individual men's personal complicity in perpetuating violence in the group.

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