

# Recommendations from the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee

2020

Office of the Chief Coroner  
June 2021

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Domestic Violence Death Review Committee**

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In December 2009, the Department of Public Safety, Chief Coroner's Office, established the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to assist the Office of the Chief Coroner in the review of deaths of persons that occur as a result of domestic violence, and to make recommendations to help prevent such deaths in similar circumstances. The Chair of the Committee is the Deputy Chief Coroner with members from law enforcement, Public Prosecutions, health, academia, research, service provision, interested citizens and government.

A domestic violence death is defined as a homicide or suicide that results from violence between intimate partners or ex-partners and may include the death of a child or other familial members.

The committee provides a confidential multi-disciplinary review of domestic violence deaths. It creates and maintains a comprehensive database about the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence fatalities and their circumstances. It helps identify systemic issues, problems, gaps, or shortcomings in each case and may make appropriate recommendations concerning prevention. It helps identify trends, risk factors, and patterns from the cases reviewed to make recommendations for effective intervention and prevention strategies.

For the period 2010 – 2020, the Committee has reviewed and submitted reports on 21 cases to the Chief Coroner. In turn the Chief Coroner has forwarded the reports to government departments and agencies involved in the cases for response. Departments and agencies involved have responded to the Chief Coroner on the actions they intend to take to implement the recommendations. The recommendations and responses for the 21 cases reviewed to date are available on the Public Safety [website](#). The recommendations and departmental responses to the latest cases are reported on the following pages.

Improving our understanding of why perpetrators of abuse kill their intimate partners and why victims of abuse are vulnerable and using this information to take action to prevent future deaths is essential to reveal systemic gaps and to reduce and eliminate domestic violence in New Brunswick. The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee has an opportunity to educate government and community agencies in New Brunswick with the goal of preventing future domestic homicides and assaults.

The committee continues to meet and review cases.

## **Recommendations and Responses**

### **Recommendation #1**

The Minister of Public Safety incorporate D/IPV guidance in their policy regarding the supervision of offenders who have been convicted of a D/IPV offence(s). This guidance would include risk factors associated to D/IPV re-offending and lethality risks. Education may be required for a uniform response by New Brunswick probation officers in D/IPV cases. The Minister of Public Safety should also ensure that probation officers receive extensive and ongoing training on D/IPV regarding associated risk factors. Annual training is therefore strongly recommended and encouraged.

### **Response – Justice and Public Safety**

The Community Services Branch is revising its D/IPV policy to provide greater clarity and guidance to probation officers who are supervising clients who have been convicted of a D/IPV offence. This policy will include the risk factors associated with D/IPV re-offending and lethality risks. The branch is also exploring opportunities to provide ongoing training to probation staff on D/IPV, its risk factors for re-offence and lethality, and coercive control. Equally important, this training will equip probation officers with strategies to manage their clients' risks and increase protective factors while enhancing victim and community safety.

### **Recommendation #2**

The Minister of Justice and the Attorney General should request, where and when applicable, that when an offender is ordered to a supervised probation due to a D/IPV related offence/infraction that the offender shall forthwith report any new relationship to the supervising probation officer.

### **Response – Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General**

Public Prosecution Services (PPS) is operationally independent from the Department of Justice and Public Safety. PPS is responsible for prosecuting offences under the *Criminal Code of Canada* and other federal legislation, as well as provincial offences.

PPS agrees, in principle, with the recommendation. As it stands now, such a condition is not listed amongst the compulsory conditions set forth in subsection 732.1(2) of the *Criminal Code*, nor in the optional ones in subsection 732.1(3). It is the view of PPS, however, that courts would have the power to impose such a condition under a probation order, as per paragraph 732.1(3)(h) of the *Criminal Code*.

Probation orders must be clear, unambiguous and enforceable. As set out in paragraph 732.1(3)(h), the court may prescribe that the offender “comply, with such other reasonable conditions as the court considers desirable, [...] for protecting society and for facilitating the offender’s successful reintegration into the community.” Where PPS determines that optional probation conditions are reasonably necessary to prevent future offences, protect society, and facilitate the offender’s successful reintegration into the community, they will seek them, but more precise language would be required.

### **Recommendation #3**

The Minister of Public Safety shall direct Coroner Services to provide standard training for all Coroners charged with investigating any D/IPV related death. Coroners should be receiving training on the different types of intimate partner violence and the services provided in the region that the victim may have accessed. Also, ensuring that the investigating Coroner speaks with anyone associated with the victim and couple’s life as a means of gathering information pertinent to the case.

## **Response – Justice and Public Safety**

Coroner Services has engaged the Women’s Equality Branch to prepare and deliver training to all coroners charged with investigating any D/IPV related death. This training is expected to include the different types of intimate partner violence as well as an overview of services available to victims of D/IPV in New Brunswick. Coroner Services will ensure that investigating coroners speak with people involved with or known to the deceased or the perpetrator.

### **Recommendation #4**

The Minister of Health and the Regional Health authorities should ensure the completion of screening for intimate partner violence, victim and/or perpetrator, at intake for substance abuse or detox center. The Minister of Health should consider best practice(s) already in place that may help make the link or recommendation to services offered in the respective region of the offender and/or victim.

- The DVDRC has considered the Department of Health’s 2015 response to our 2014 recommendations; the Department of Health’s 2017 response to our 2016 recommendations. We also recognize that a recommendation was made as well in 2018 that should lead to better screening of D/IPV.
- We acknowledge the important work that has taken place to date and recognize that significant additional work is needed in NB to better address D/IPV lethality.

## **Response – Health**

On February 1, 2021, the new addictions and mental health clinic intake screening tool was introduced for all clinicians. This screening tool includes questions related to intimate partner violence and expressing intent to harm others. In instances where there is a concern for a victimizing partner there are further exploratory questions related to safety to help with case planning.

The Addictions and Mental Health Branch in the Department of Health intends to form a working group to review current best practices related to assessment and intervention of suicide risk and homicide risk.

### **Recommendation #5**

The Minister of Public Safety should do a review of current programs across various jurisdictions aimed at reducing incidents of D/IPV with offenders. Evidence based programs should be implemented in respective regions that replace ‘anger management programs’ as this is not a substitute for the D/IPV intervention program.

## **Response – Justice and Public Safety**

In the context of NB’s Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy, JPS completed a review of community correctional approaches, including community programming, to ensure alignment with best-practices. The review identified strengths, weaknesses, gaps and potential solutions to these identified gaps; and the review proposed a number of recommendations, including options that will have an impact on D/IPV. JPS is exploring the possibility of implementing an evidence-based comprehensive multi-target program that addresses criminogenic needs (e.g., substance abuse, attitudes supportive of crime, etc.) relevant to individuals who engage in D/IPV. In addition, a recommendation was made to clearly define and implement intervention ‘dosage’. This helps meet client needs through cognitive behavioral interventions provided by probation officers and associated tools, such as the Courage to Change interactive journals. These methods can be used to compliment skills learned in D/IPV programming.

## Recommendation #6

- a. That the Minister of Health add a specific D/IPV screening tool to existing intake assessments in both Addiction and Mental Health Centers and Community Health Centers. And when applicable, D/IPV risk factors form part of the case plan. Moreover, the tool should inquire on a person's living/relationship situation. If one is living and or in a relationship with a person suffering from mental health issues, it needs to be considered when case planning and when it comes to assessing to risk factors.
- b. To support the implementation of the new screening tool and inclusion of D/IPV risk factors in case plans, we recommend that the Minister of Health also mandates training for all staff in mental health and addiction services on the co-occurrence of domestic violence and mental health problems. The training should be comprehensive on all forms of domestic violence and include coercive control.
- c. We support the recommendations made in this case by the suicide review committee of the Campbellton Regional Hospital and would recommend that they should be applied province wide.

The recommendations were as followed:

- To develop a procedure that would ensure continuity of services for patients from the Community Mental Health Center who present themselves for mental health issues at the walk-in clinic located in Dalhousie.
- Provide information sessions to employees and doctors on the collaborative practice and of the walk-in clinic of Dalhousie on the crisis services offered by the community mental health center.

## Response – Health

As part of the new addictions and mental health screening tool that was implemented on February 1, 2021, when a risk is flagged, subsequent questions explore supports and safety planning as part of the case plan.

As part of the Education, Training, and Knowledge Transfer (ETK) project slated for implementation in 2021/2022, the Department of Health can explore opportunities to include women abuse protocol training and a danger assessment tool as part of foundational training for addiction and mental health clinicians.

The Department of Health has recently initiated discussions with:

- The Department of Justice and Public Safety about victim services coordinator as coordinated community response; and
- The Women's Equality Branch about transition houses and second-stage housing.

This collaboration is to explore opportunities to strengthen response through inclusion of training on suicide risk and awareness of resources, to respond to mental health crisis for these professionals. Further meetings will follow.

## Recommendation #7

The Minister of Public Safety should make *The Love Shouldn't Hurt* campaign more proactive with the objective to re-emphasize information and awareness about coercive control and the warning signs of abusive behaviors. Being more proactive and visible to the general public would extend the reach and awareness of the campaign to a broader audience by providing public information including ways to contact police, victim services and other services available to vulnerable individual for advice and support in non-emergency situations and also when recognizing warning signs of D/IPV.

## **Response – Justice and Public Safety**

In 2019, the Roundtable on Crime and Public Safety endorsed the 2020-2023 Crime Prevention Strategy Action Plan, which includes an activity to *“expand the reach of the Love Shouldn’t Hurt (LSH) campaign to end intimate partner violence through increased collaboration and shared ownership by partners.”* LSH is committed to increasing campaign engagement by 25 % per year over the next three years. To reach this goal, a LSH coordinator was hired in July 2020 with federal funds to coordinate the campaign’s social media accounts, public engagement, and champion initiatives. However, without sustainable funding, the LSH coordinator position will end in June 2021.

In addition, the LSH Advisory Committee has grown its membership to include representatives from the Canadian Mental Health Association, Department of Health, and Coroner Services alongside its long-standing members from the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (MMFC); Sexual Violence NB; White Ribbon Fredericton; Partners For Youth; NB Multicultural Council; Fredericton Police Force; RCMP J Division; Public Legal Education and Information Service NB; Women’s Equality Branch (WEB); and Social Development.

The LSH Advisory Committee commits to working with the MMFC, WEB and other experts to host a webinar on coercive control for the general population with the potential for additional information sessions for service providers. LSH frequently shares messages via its social media accounts about the warning signs of D/IPV and community resources for support, including a resource guide for victims of D/IPV and a resource guide for partners who abuse. LSH actively searches for new resources to share which may be of value to New Brunswickers subjected to violence, including NB211 and Bridge the Gapp. LSH will continue to share these messages and will seek new opportunities to disseminate information via off-line platforms and through various partnerships with groups across the province.

## **Recommendation #8**

[The government of New Brunswick, under the leadership of the Premier, partner with the private sector to support the province’s prevention and response efforts to address domestic, intimate partner violence \(DIPV\) in New Brunswick, including providing resources to undertake key initiatives.](#)

## **Response – Office of the Premier**

Domestic violence is one of the most serious, ongoing and complex social problems that our province faces. Its impacts are devastating, far reaching, and very costly. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem by adding more stress and anxiety in homes, increasing the isolation experienced by victims of violence and their children and making it more difficult for service providers to be made aware and to respond. Changes in the tactics used to commit violence and increase control have also been documented during the pandemic. As the death reviews completed in 2020 reveal, we need to do better in recognizing and addressing coercive controlling behaviour.

As Premier, I will ask my Ministers to engage government’s resources in implementing the recommendations in the report. Under my leadership, the Government of New Brunswick will also explore opportunities to partner with the private sector to advance the province’s prevention and response efforts to address domestic violence, including providing resources to undertake key initiatives.

## **Response – Women’s Equality Branch**

As the Women’s Equality Branch (WEB) currently chairs the New Brunswick D/IPV in the Workplace Committee, WEB and the Committee have partnerships with some private sector employer representatives (e.g. Chamber of Commerce) and are working to establish further contacts among the private sector in the future, in order to raise further awareness and provide training opportunities on D/IPV in the Workplace.

WEB will continue to work with other departments to support the province's prevention and response efforts to address D/IPV in New Brunswick, particularly as it affects workplaces. This is especially important given that regulatory changes addressing violence and harassment as workplace health and safety hazards came into force as of April 2019 under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, requiring employers to complete any necessary risk assessments for violence in the workplace – including domestic, intimate partner and sexual violence – and put the appropriate policies and procedures into place.

WEB provided advice and support to PETL in the inclusion of domestic, intimate partner and sexual violence leave into the Employment Standards Act. This leave is available to all employees in both the public and private sectors so that the employee can receive the healing and support needed to deal with the impact of the violence without fear of losing their job in addition to enhancing their safety by not being at work or by providing them with the time needed to move. The D/IPV in the Workplace Committee has included this in their toolkit and provides the information to both employers and employees through their website and trainings.

### **Recommendation #9**

Minister of Public Safety conduct an evaluation of the Love Shouldn't Hurt Campaign to assess its effectiveness and reach using the following questions as a guide.

- How many New Brunswickers has the campaign reached?
- Have citizens changed their attitudes and behaviors with respect to D/IPV?
- Are New Brunswickers more aware of D/IPV and the types of behaviors that constitute intimate partner violence?
- Are New Brunswickers concerned about the impact of D/IPV on victims and children?

### **Response – Justice and Public Safety**

LSH has tracked the number of New Brunswickers who have engaged with the campaign since its launch in October 2015; these numbers indicate an 83% increase in campaign reach from 2019 to 2020. The total number of people and organizations engaged in/reached by the campaign as of December 2020 was 186,420.

Sustainable funding for the campaign remains a barrier to conducting a thorough evaluation of the campaign's effectiveness in meeting its objectives, which are to: 1) reframe D/IPV as a serious social issues that we all can play a role in ending; 2) build a shared understanding of what is D/IPV; and 3) promote a belief that it is possible to do something about it. Federal funding was secured over five years (2014/15 to 2018/19) from Justice Canada for the campaign, and again in 2020-2021 to hire a part-time coordinator to promote the campaign. Bridge funding is being provided by a partner organization (the Crime Prevention Association of NB) until June 2021.

The LSH Advisory Committee commits to working with its partners, most notably the Women's Equality Branch (WEB), to access the cost and feasibility of measuring New Brunswickers' attitudes, perceptions and behaviours as they relate to D/IPV. In 2002 and again in 2009, WEB engaged a professional consulting company to conduct a New Brunswick attitudinal survey on violence against women. We will explore with WEB any opportunity to replicate this survey, using the questions provided by the DVDRC as a guide.

### **Recommendation #10**

That Women's Equality Branch, as leader of the messages and awareness being distributed by government regarding D/IPV should ensure all members of their organization are familiar with coercive control behaviors in the dynamic of intimate partner violence. To do so they could employ their own expert to familiarize staff with this aspect of D/IPV. The rationale behind this recommendation is that when it comes time for public awareness to be done, WEB will be prepared for questions from frontline workers, other professionals, the public and victims of coercive control. The Committee wants

to ensure that, when the public gets an awareness campaign, that professionals responding to public queries have an understanding of coercive control in intimate partner violence. This recommendation could also be extended to police forces and/or the justice system.

### **Response – Women’s Equality Branch**

The Women’s Equality Branch (WEB) has expertise in domestic/intimate partner violence including coercive control and addresses coercive control in all training sessions such as those provided on the Danger Assessment tool to assess the risk of lethality of a victim of D/IPV, Emergency Intervention Order training, and the Foundations of D/IPV. These training sessions are offered as needed to the D/IPV sector (frontline workers), as well as to representatives of Victim Services, Probations, Mental Health, Social Development, police forces and other partner organizations when requested. WEB is committed to sharing this knowledge with as many frontline workers and professionals as possible where resources permit.

WEB will continue to inform its training content based on evidence and research through partnerships with the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (MMFC), the Centre for Research and Education on violence against Women and Children (CREVAWC), and the Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative, as well as ongoing research globally.

WEB agrees that it is paramount that all frontline professionals be aware of this behaviour in abusive relationships, including police and justice system professionals.

### **Recommendation #11**

Minister responsible for Women’s Equality in partnership with Public Safety develop a bystander awareness and action campaign that builds on the Love Shouldn’t Hurt and Now You Know campaigns, incorporating learning from the evaluation of the Love Shouldn’t Hurt campaign. A far reaching, inclusive and creative bystander campaign could include but not be limited to: advertisements, billboards and info graphics in high-traffic areas online and offline (e.g. TV, radio, websites, malls, shops, etc.); key messages targeting various audiences with respect to red flags (e.g. animal abuse), risk factors (e.g. obsessive behaviors) and support services available; and possible actions to take.

### **Response – Women’s Equality Branch**

WEB will make all of its training and awareness materials and expertise available for the development of a bystander awareness and action campaign, combining resources with Public Safety, and will work to implement any measures recommended following an evaluation of the Love Shouldn’t Hurt campaign. With the proper resources, this could be an effective way to reach the general public and help equip them with actions they can take in situations of domestic violence. WEB will work with Public Safety to explore funding options for such a widespread awareness campaign.

In the interim, WEB will begin to draft infographics and key messages based on red flags and risk factors and explore different ways to promote these messages including on social media. During the COVID-19 State of Emergency in the spring of 2020, WEB developed a Domestic Violence Fact Sheet providing information on how to recognize domestic violence and how to seek help from existing support services for publication on the Government of New Brunswick’s coronavirus web page. WEB also sent out regular educational and informational messages through social media throughout the State of Emergency and beyond. Social media efforts led to an increased reach of audience members by 334% to 675% (English and French Facebook pages respectively) upon beginning the awareness campaign during the lockdown. WEB will explore ways to reignite that messaging incorporating red flags and risk factors, and a reminder of support services available.



## **Response – Justice and Public Safety**

The LSH Advisory Committee recognizes the need for increased bystander awareness and action regarding D/IPV and has researched other successful bystander campaigns, including Ontario's *Neighbours, Friends & Families* campaign hosted by the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children at Western University. JPS has discussed this recommendation with WEB and will continue to explore opportunities with our partners to network and leverage resources for an educational, wide-reaching bystander intervention campaign.

## **Recommendation #12**

The Women's Equality Branch, the Department of Justice, Public Safety and Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Health and the Department of Social Development develop and disseminate public service announcements that profile the high risk of D/IPV homicide including but not limited to: actual or pending separation; substance use; suicide ideations; strangling/choking; stalking; obsessive behaviours; and the presence of "coercive control" in intimate relationships. This will help the general public and professionals be aware of the dynamics of multiple risk factors and potential risk of domestic homicide and how to promote safety planning and risk reduction in these circumstances.

## **Response – Women's Equality Branch**

WEB commits to developing messaging for public service announcements profiling high risk factors for D/IPV homicide and to identifying options for disseminating them with the departments of Justice and Public Safety (JPS), Health and Social Development, based on experience developing public service announcements for the Now You Know campaign on sexual violence. WEB can lead the drafting of the messages in collaboration with other departmental experts (e.g. JPS), coordinate the publication of the PSAs and work with the other departments to ensure the PSAs are shared in as many accessible places as possible.

Currently, these risk factors are included in the training WEB delivers to partners and stakeholders (which include professionals, government departments, community agencies and other interested individuals). The trainings delivered by WEB include the Danger Assessment Training, D/IPV Foundations and D/IPV Foundations with an Indigenous Lens.

## **Response – Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General**

Through the LSH Advisory Committee, JPS commits to meeting with implicated Departments to explore possibilities of creating public service announcements for use on social media and traditional methods, such as radio and printed materials, which speak to the risk factors associated with D/IPV homicide. The LSH campaign has created content that highlights these risk factors, which can easily be incorporated into a public service announcement.

As the death reviews completed in 2020 reveal, we need to do better to recognize and address coercive controlling behaviour. D/IPV experts across the country, and right here in New Brunswick, are advocating for this form of violence to be criminalized, as it has been in England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the D/IPV problem by adding more stress and anxiety in homes, increasing the isolation experienced by victims of violence and their children, and making it more difficult for service providers to be made aware and to respond. Changes in the tactics used to commit violence and increase control have also been documented during the pandemic. JPS will take steps to ensure coercive control is understood, recognized, and addressed by its employees intervening in D/IPV situations, and that it is included in LSH materials.

## **Response – Health**

While the Department's addictions and mental health awareness campaigns bring public attention to issues related to suicide risk and substance use, among others, the Department does not speak to suicide risk or substance use in the context of intimate partner violence risk.

As part of the Department's involvement in the Love Shouldn't Hurt (LSH) Committee, ways to bridge addictions and mental health awareness campaigns and promotional weeks with the LSH campaign have been discussed. For example, awareness campaign dates could be shared with the coordinator of the LSH campaign for inclusion in social media sites.

## **Response – Social Development**

WEB has committed to the following actions:

To develop messaging for public service announcements profiling high risk factors for D/IPV homicide and to identify options for disseminating them with the Departments of Justice and Public Safety, Health and Social Development, based on experience developing public service announcements for the Now You Know campaign on sexual violence. WEB will lead the drafting of the messages in collaboration with other departmental experts (e.g. Justice and Public Safety), coordinate the publication of the PSAs and work with the other departments to ensure the PSAs are shared in as many accessible places as possible.

Currently, these risk factors are included in the training WEB delivers to partners and stakeholders (which include professionals, government departments, community agencies and other interested individuals). The training to be delivered by WEB include the Danger Assessment Training, D/IPV Foundations and D/IPV Foundations with an Indigenous Lens.

The Department of Social Development commits to collaborate with WEB, the Departments of Justice and Public Safety and Health in developing public service announcements while keeping in mind Social Development's wide target population base, as well as share all prevention materials / information with all designated Social Development Staff, such as but not limited to Child Protection Workers, Screening and Needs Assessors, Social Assistance Case Managers, Housing Program Officers, Warehouse Maintenance Staff and Technical Staff, etc. In addition, Social Development will commit to promote all D/IPV training sessions and promotional infographics from various campaigns, such as the "Love Shouldn't Hurt" Campaign to all designated Social Development Staff for their own knowledge and to share with their clients.

## **Recommendation #13**

Minister responsible for Women's Equality, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, Minister of Post-secondary Education, Training and Labour and WorkSafe NB support the DIPV Workplace Committee of New Brunswick in developing mandatory e-learning modules on domestic intimate partner violence for workplaces, so they are accessible to all employers (public, private sectors and voluntary).

## **Response – Women's Equality Branch**

WEB currently chairs the New Brunswick Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence (D/IPV) in the Workplace Committee, whose membership includes government departments, community agencies, researchers, employer and labor representatives.

WEB is working with Finance and Treasury Board (FTB), Post-secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL) and WorkSafe NB as well as Justice and Public Safety (JPS), all of which have representatives on the D/IPV in the Workplace Committee, on the longer-term strategic planning process of the Committee and to support the sustainability of the Committee's D/IPV Workplace Toolkit for employers. This includes helping to identify resources and opportunities to support the development of e-learning modules and making them available to employers, including potentially hosting them on a GNB department or WorkSafe NB website, promoting the e-learning modules, and continuing to offer WEB's training expertise and content for the development of the courses. WEB has led the in-person training efforts of the Committee upon request, offering four (4) training sessions and four (4) webinars to employers over the past two years and will continue to do so where resources permit. WEB will commit to supplying the content of this training to the creators of the e-learning modules and working on developing content with an e-learning curriculum developer selected by the Committee when resources become available.

WEB will also work with Committee members including other government departments to initiate an environmental scan of e-learning modules that may already exist on D/IPV in the Workplace in other jurisdictions, and support exploration of funding and sustainability options such as through regional Atlantic collaboration, with the recent establishment of the Atlantic Domestic Homicide Review Network making domestic homicide a priority among Atlantic provinces.

### **Response – Finance and Treasury Board**

The Women's Equality Branch chairs the New Brunswick Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence D/IPV in the Workplace Committee, whose membership includes government departments, community agencies, researchers, employer and labour representatives.

As a member of the committee, the Department of Finance and Treasury Board will collaborate and provide support as required, to support the sustainability of the Committee's D/IPV Workplace Toolkit for employers which includes a plan for the development of e-learning modules on domestic/intimate partner violence for workplaces, as outlined in the WEB's reply to Recommendation #13.

Upon development of the modules, Finance and Treasury Board will ensure that the e-learning training is made available to public sector employees and expectations around participation are communicated.

### **Response – Post Secondary Education Training and Labour**

The Department continues to be a participating member of the Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence D/IPV in the Workplace Committee, including providing input into the updated D/IPV in the Workplace Toolkit for employers. As you are likely aware the D/IPV in the Workplace Toolkit and website were updated in 2020. The D/IPV in the Workplace Committee is developing a long-term strategic plan to support the sustainability of the Committee's D/IPV Workplace Toolkit for employers. The Department continues to work with Women's Equality, Finance and Treasury Board, and WorkSafe NB in developing our engagement with, and support of, the Committee's work.

### **Response – WorkSafe NB**

In 2019 WorkSafe NB was invited by Women's Equality Branch of the Executive Council Office to participate as a member on the D/IPV Workplace Committee of New Brunswick and we continue to provide advice and support to the Committee on the development of e-learning modules and other guidance resources. As additional materials and e-learning modules are made available, WorkSafe NB will add them to the resources available and promoted to New Brunswick employers.

In addition to the resources noted above, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety offers a Domestic Violence in the Workplace e-learning course. The course, recommended for employers, employees, managers and supervisors, is in both official languages and can be accessed through the following link: [https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/domestic\\_violence/](https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/domestic_violence/).

#### **Recommendation #14**

The D/IPV Workplace Committee of New Brunswick explore, with WorkSafe NB and PETL, if further courses of action are needed when anyone on behalf of employee notifies workplace of employee taking sick leave or leave of absence (e.g. when out of character or absence is longer than usual, etc.) and adding information and procedures to assist employers in supporting employees.

#### **Response – Post Secondary Education Training and Labour**

Employee leaves of absence are covered under the *Employment Standards Act* (Act). The Act does not explicitly address situations in which someone other than the employee notified the employer of an employee's absence. The Department will work with WorkSafe NB and other partners on the D/IPV in the Workplace Committee to review this recommendation and consider options to enhance employers' ability to detect red flags when their employees may be experiencing domestic and intimate partner violence.

The work of the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee continues to provide critical insight into how prevention and response to domestic violence can be improved in the Province. The department continues to be very interested in collaborating within Government and with external partners through the D/IPV in the Workplace Committee to foster healthy and safe workplaces, and to enhance staff awareness.

#### **Response – WorkSafe NB**

WorkSafe NB remains committed to working with the D/IPV Workplace Committee and PETL to determine if further courses of action are required to assist employers in supporting their employees in these circumstances.

#### **Response – Women's Equality Branch**

As WEB currently chairs the New Brunswick D/IPV in the Workplace Committee, we work with PETL and WorkSafe NB to inform the Committee's toolkit for employers based on appropriate legislative measures, new leaves available under the *Employment Standards Act* related to domestic violence and actions employers can take. We have committed to meeting with WorkSafe NB and PETL to develop a list of courses of action that would be appropriate based on red flags in domestic violence situations. WEB will work with WorkSafe NB and PETL to share those measures with employers by incorporating them into training offered both by WEB and by the Committee, including ensuring they are incorporated into the online e-learning modules developed, as well as when consulted one-on-one by employers about specific domestic violence cases. The Committee's training and online toolkit ([www.toolkitnb.ca](http://www.toolkitnb.ca)) has videos demonstrating how employers can express concern to an employee subjected to domestic violence in an appropriate way, and will look for ways to add information specific to cases of unusual notification of leaves by a contact person of an employee.