

overall and 60% of girls. A significant majority of students indicated awareness of abuse in family relationships — either their own or those of people they knew. Overall, 62% of students and 72% of females, expressed awareness of abuse (5:53).

London Family Court Clinic and clinics similar to it around the country do assessments for court-initiated cases of young offenders, child welfare matters, custody and access matters. They deal with court-related referrals that often involve the issue of violence against women. Peter Jaffe, the Clinic's Executive Director, is an active proponent of violence prevention programs in the schools. He recommended that they should be an essential part of the basics in every school system:

We believe fundamentally that violence is a learned behaviour, that the attitudes that promote violence against women are learned. They are learned in early childhood, and reinforced in a variety of ways based on what children witness in their own homes and based on the kind of images we have in our community, especially through the media... We believe that all school systems across this country should be actively involved in violence prevention programs. (5:49)

Mr. Jaffe maintains that the schools should be teaching "readin, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and relationships, in particular violent-free relationships" (5:48). The students of today are, after all, the spouses, parents, clergy, social workers, police officers and doctors of tomorrow. The thrust of his proposal was expressed by the Executive Director of the Metro Toronto Action Committee on Public Violence Against women and Children. Patricia Marshall told the Committee: "Mandatory violence prevention curriculum, kindergarten to grade 13, is the absolute essential" (5:98).

The school is one of the main socializers of children in our society. Witnesses pointed out that educators are well positioned to increase students' knowledge, awareness and comfort level with such subjects as violence, sexuality, relationships, and gender inequality. Appropriate classroom instruction can break the silence and dispel the myth that violence in the family or in other intimate relationships is a private matter, and thereby give students permission to talk about the issues. The Committee is encouraged by and supportive of the work of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. The Federation has developed a curriculum guide entitled *Thumbs Down, A Classroom Response to Violence Against Women*, which contains sample lessons designed for levels kindergarten to grade 12. In age-appropriate ways, it encourages classroom discussion and activities aimed at teaching boys and girls non-violence in human relationships, responsibility for one's own actions, emotional development, the effects of gender stereotyping, and the influence of the media on gender roles. The Committee is impressed that an integral part of the curriculum in school systems across Canada should include violence prevention programs that begin in elementary school and continue to the end of high school.