

...where children learn communication skills, anger management, substance abuse prevention, sexual abuse prevention, learn to understand sexuality, learn their rights and responsibilities, and learn to develop a sense of self-acceptance and self-worth. We can all think of programs that are aimed at some or most of these issues, but they are provided sporadically and as a sideline to core curriculum. (83:17)

The Committee agrees that an integral part of the curriculum in the schools across the country should include violence prevention programs that begin in elementary school and continue to the final year of high school.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the federal government work with the provinces, the territories and relevant professions to promote violence-prevention education as an integral part of the curriculum in elementary, junior and high schools across Canada.

I. Select Criminal Justice Responses

During the hearing process, a number of witnesses made recommendations that relate more to enforcement issues than to crime prevention as the Committee has chosen to define it. Acknowledging that crime control measures do not address the underlying causes of crime, the Committee has nevertheless become convinced of the need for a timely response to certain shortcomings within the system.

The Committee heard from witnesses that women and children's safety and security could be improved if the criminal justice system responded in a more sensitive and effective manner to threats and actual violence.

Susan McCrae Vander Voet of METRAC, (78:18) and Debi Forsyth-Smith, of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, (71:8) highlighted the need to find a way to separate violent men from their spouses and children other than the current practice that essentially forces the victims to seek refuge from violence by leaving the family home. Susan McCrae Vander Voet told the Committee:

One...measure that could make quite a difference to women is the abuser is removed from the home rather than the woman, at least overnight. We used to do that with people who were drinking and staggering around the streets...and we probably still do to some extent. Why can't we do that with a man who is out of control? There is nothing in the law to prevent us from doing that, but nobody is. (78:18)

The Committee is concerned with those instances when victims of wife assault and their children are required to flee the family home in order to protect themselves from further abuse. The Committee agrees that even a short-term "cooling off period" could provide victims time to determine an appropriate course of action and to defuse the emotional climate surrounding the event so as to decrease the immediate likelihood to continued violence.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Minister of Justice in consultation with provincial Attorneys General review existing charging policies and powers of arrest in domestic violence situations to ensure that, where appropriate, abusers are