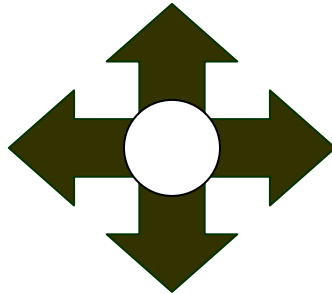

Evaluation of the Society Against Family Violence

FINAL REPORT – WINTER 2002



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Acknowledgements

The RESOLVE Alberta research team would like to extend our appreciation to the members of the Research Advisory Team for their input to the research process. All research conducted by RESOLVE is guided by research advisory teams comprised of both community members and academic researchers. Such community and academic collaboration ensures that the community actively participates throughout the research process to make the research results applicable to practice and policy. Collaborative research assists practitioners, agency workers, and other stakeholders develop a better understanding of problems and, ultimately, of solutions.

RESOLVE Alberta would like to acknowledge the extensive efforts of Fred Follitt, Coordinator of the Society Against Family Violence, and Jennifer Olsen, Coordinator of the Banff Service Industry Network. In addition to organizing and recruiting participants for the focus groups and interviews, both Fred and Jennifer provided extra assistance throughout the research process. Community businesses and organizations in the towns of Banff and Canmore donated space and resources for the focus groups: thanks to the Ralph Conner Memorial Church (Canmore), the Radisson Hotel and Conference Centre (Canmore), St. James Irish Pub (Banff), Banff Senior's Centre (Banff), the Aurora Nightclub (Banff), and the Y.W.C.A. (Banff) for hosting the focus groups. This research would not have taken place without the participation of the 60 research participants who offered their time, opinions, and experiences. Thank you.

This research was funded through the Wild Rose Foundation of Alberta and the Banff Service Industry Network, with additional resources provided by RESOLVE Alberta to complete the project.

Questions about this research can be directed to RESOLVE Alberta, the Society Against Family Violence, and/or the Banff Service Industry Network.

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 The Bow Valley

Nestled in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta, the Bow Valley area thrives on tourism. Slightly over 100 kilometers outside of Calgary, the communities of Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise, and the Bow Corridor lie within the borders of the Bow Valley. Economically, the area is predominantly dependent on the tourism industry, which employs a large proportion of the permanent population, and also creates an enormous demand for seasonal labourers. Typically, the lower level positions are filled by young adults between the ages of 16 to 30, the majority of whom travel from across Canada and abroad to take part in the resort town experience. This transient undercurrent and seasonal flood of young adults into the Bow Valley has led to a number of issues for the communities, the young workers, the employers, and the human service agencies, that raise questions about how to best meet the needs of the population at large.

1.2 The Current Collaborative Research Project

The Society Against Family Violence (SAFV) is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to provide violence prevention and education in the Bow Valley. The SAFV Coordinator, a part-time position, acts as a referral source, facilitates community projects and events, and organizes a resource library and web-site. The education and prevention program that SAFV offers provides a network of support to those in need, while working to break the silent suffering and cycle of abuse experienced by those impacted by various forms of violence and abuse in the community. A portion of SAFV's funding for the 2000/2001 fiscal year was earmarked to evaluate the Coordinator position, including SAFV's work and profile in the Bow Valley.

The Banff Service Industry Network (BSIN) is a new organization based in Banff that works to reduce crime through improving the quality of life for young people in Banff. BSIN hopes to address the concerns expressed by the community by developing social programs to assist young adults. These initiatives are to be based on feedback gathered directly from young adults in Banff, to enhance the utility and effectiveness of programs that are directed to young adults and the issues they face.

BSIN and SAFV operate from a proactive, preventative stance in identifying potential core factors of the challenges encountered by their agencies and the populations they serve. Both agencies share common interests in wishing to connect with the young adult community in the Bow Valley, who make up such a large proportion of the population. In addition, SAFV and BSIN consider interagency partnerships to be an effective means to meet the needs of the population at large; to avoid overlap and duplication of service; and to make constructive use of limited funding dollars. The Research Advisory Committee was formed through professional contacts of SAFV and BSIN that have a vested interest in the research results.

The research results are divided into two reports, "An Assessment of the Needs of Young Adults in the Bow Valley: Challenges of the Resort Town Experience", and

“Evaluation of the Society Against Family Violence”, in order to focus the comments and discussion directly to each organization and its specific interests.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research was multidimensional. A goal of both agencies was to develop, improve, and implement future initiatives based on the feedback obtained through this research. A second goal was to identify whether there was a need for SAFV’s services in the community and to determine the current awareness and profile of SAFV’s programs and initiatives in the Bow Valley. We also wanted to identify gaps, limitations and strengths of the current domestic violence services in the Bow Valley. A final goal was to collect feedback on the efficacy of programs and initiatives currently delivered by SAFV to provide direction with respect to continuing or improving such endeavours.

The research was conducted by RESOLVE Alberta, a family violence research institute affiliated with the University of Calgary, in collaboration with the Research Advisory Team. RESOLVE Alberta is part of a tri-provincial research institute with additional offices in Manitoba (at the University of Manitoba) and Saskatchewan (at the University of Saskatchewan). RESOLVE stands for Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse.

1.4 Method

The research employed qualitative methodology designed to: 1) assess the awareness and opinions with respect to SAFV’s programs and initiatives and; 2) gather feedback regarding quality of life, and violence and non-violence related issues to help identify potential needs of young adults. Three sets of interview questions were designed for each of three subsets of participants (telephone interviews with *stakeholders*; focus groups with *adults* and focus groups with *young adults*).

1.5 Participants

In total, 60 individuals participated in the research. We conducted seven telephone interviews with stakeholders in Canmore and another seven with stakeholders in Banff. Six focus groups were offered: four were designated for *young adults* between age 18-25 (24 participants) and two for *adults* over age 25 (22 participants). One adult focus group was held in Canmore and another in Banff. For the young adults, one focus group was held in Canmore and three in Banff. The focus group participants were all living in the Bow Valley at the time the focus groups were conducted. The majority of stakeholders were representatives from human services in the Bow Valley.

1.6 Research Results

The results indicate that the large majority of the discussions, debates and suggestions of the sixty individuals who participated in the research support the ideas and the current initiatives of the society. The research participants had a range of involvement with SAFV and, as a result, offered diverse feedback from differing perspectives. The

participants noted a number of ways in which SAFV was already demonstrating success in meeting its mandate of violence prevention and education in the Bow Valley, such as through the AppreSHEation event, interagency collaborations, and its work in the schools.

The respondents made several general suggestions with respect to improving and consolidating the society in the Bow Valley. These recommendations all entail the need to secure sustained and dependable funding for the organization, a central concern of the research participants. They also imply the need for the SAFV Coordinator position to be full- rather than part-time. However, the society needs core funding for a full-time coordinator position to more fully and realistically accomplish its goals and to create a higher profile in both Banff and Canmore.

2.0 Context for the Research: The Bow Valley

Nestled in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta, the Bow Valley area thrives on tourism. Slightly over 100 kilometers outside of Calgary, the communities of Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise, and the Bow Corridor lie within the borders of the Bow Valley. Banff is situated within the boundaries of Banff National Park, while Canmore is approximately five minutes outside of the park gates. Economically, the area is predominantly dependent on the tourism industry, which includes a number of large ski resorts, two famous historical hotels (in Banff and Lake Louise), numerous other hotels, a large arts and cultural community, golf courses, and passageways to various other outdoor activities. Essentially, the valley is a nature lover's paradise.

The broad scope of the tourism industry across the Bow Valley employs a large proportion of the permanent population, plus entails an enormous demand for seasonal labourers. Every year, a large influx of seasonal workers arrives in the valley to fill positions within the tourism industry. Tourism-related jobs can include everything from management, housekeeping in a hotel, or operating a chair lift at one of the local ski hills. Typically, the lower level positions are filled by young adults between the ages of 16 to 30, the majority of whom travel from across Canada and abroad to take part in the resort town experience. This transient undercurrent and seasonal flood of young adults into the Bow Valley has led to a number of issues for the communities, the young workers, the employers, and the human service agencies, that raise questions about how to best meet the needs of the population at large.

Demographically, the two larger Bow Valley communities of Banff and Canmore have some distinct characteristics. In the year 2001, the permanent population in Canmore was recorded as 10,843¹ while Banff's permanent population was 5,663². However, these totals are not entirely accurate reflections of the communities. With respect to non-permanent or seasonal residents, Canmore recorded an additional 2,273 individuals, while Banff noted an additional 1,147, plus another 906 whose status was unknown. Moreover, Canmore has a larger traditional family population, in that children under fifteen years old make up 18.8% of the total population, while they comprise only 8.7% of the total population in Banff. Part of this difference between the two communities may be rooted in the fact that 35% of Canmore residents live in Canmore, but work in Banff and surrounding areas³.

Given that such a high percentage of people in the Bow Valley live in one community yet work in another, connecting with the Bow Valley population at large can be difficult. While some agencies are mandated to provide services for the entire Bow Valley this may be difficult when staff works only part time. Further, some funding bodies mandate that a specific percentage of the funded agencies' work must take place

¹ Source: *2001 Canmore Census*. Retrieved January 31, 2002, from <http://www.gov.canmore.ab.ca/html/AboutCanmore/2001executivesummary.pdf>.

² Source: Banff Municipal Census as cited in Townofbanff (n.d.). *Demographics*. Retrieved January 31, 2002, from <http://townofbanff.../docs/demographics?OpenDocuments&AutoFramed>.

³ refer to #2.

in a particular community, in effect limiting the work the agency may be able to conduct in other communities.

2.1 The Current Collaborative Research Project

The Society Against Family Violence (SAFV) is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to provide violence prevention and education in the Bow Valley. The SAFV Coordinator, a part-time position, acts as a referral source, facilitates community projects and events, and organizes a resource library and web-site. The education and prevention program that SAFV offers provides a network of support to those in need, while working to break the silent suffering and cycle of abuse experienced by those impacted by various forms of violence and abuse in the community. Through community events that focus on violence education and prevention, SAFV works to facilitate connections with community members and to commemorate diversity of the human experience. Since its transformation from a committee of professionals representing community agencies to a non-profit society in 1998, SAFV has struggled with a number of concerns with respect to both the organization itself and the population it serves.

The society has experienced problems establishing secure, sustained, and adequate funding. As a result, the high turnover in the Coordinator position has contributed to a significant loss of time that could have been dedicated to programming. In turn, there has been some inconsistency in the provision of SAFV's programs and initiatives in the community, including the maintenance of the community resource referral posters. In addition, SAFV has experienced a low profile in terms of community awareness of what specifically is SAFV's mandate in the Bow Valley community. Nevertheless, SAFV has persevered in the face of such adverse circumstances. The current Coordinator, Fred Folliott, has been in the position for the past 15 months and has sought to stabilize the society.

Based in Banff and principally funded through the Y.W.C.A since 1997/1998, SAFV has been mandated to dedicate 85% of its work within the town of Banff and the remaining 15% of time in the other communities in the Bow Valley. For the 2000/2001 fiscal year, SAFV applied for additional funding for the Coordinator position and to help SAFV improve the connection with the Canmore community. SAFV received \$20,000 from the Wild Rose Foundation for these purposes. A portion of the grant was designated to evaluate the Coordinator position and SAFV's work and profile in the Bow Valley.

The Banff Service Industry Network (BSIN) is a new organization that grew out of recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force and the Community Policing Advisory Committee in Banff. These recommendations stemmed from community aggravation with and a media focus on young people who engage in disorderly conduct and illegal transgressions. The intent of BSIN is to reduce crime through improving the quality of life for young people in Banff. BSIN hopes to address the concerns expressed by the community by developing programs to assist young adults before such undesirable outcomes may occur. These initiatives are to be based on feedback gathered directly from young adults in Banff, to enhance the utility and effectiveness of programs that are directed to young adults and the issues they face. BSIN received core funding from the

National Crime Prevention Centre and is housed by the Town of Banff. BSIN contributed the second portion of the funding for this research project. Jennifer Olsen, the first BSIN Coordinator, began her position in July 2001.

BSIN and SAFV share common interests in wishing to connect with the young adult community in the Bow Valley, who make up such a large proportion of the population. Both agencies operate from a proactive, preventative stance in identifying potential core factors of the challenges encountered by their agencies and the populations they serve. In addition, SAFV and BSIN consider interagency partnerships to be an effective means to meet the needs of the population at large; to avoid overlap and duplication of service; and to make constructive use of limited funding dollars.

RESOLVE Alberta was initially commissioned by SAFV to conduct the evaluation for the Wild Rose Foundation. BSIN expressed interest in collaborating with the research, as it presented an opportunity to gather information directly from the community and young adults. A goal of both agencies was to develop, improve, and implement future initiatives based on the feedback obtained through this research. The Research Advisory Committee was formed through professional contacts of SAFV and BSIN that have a vested interest in the research outcomes.

The research results are divided into two reports, “Evaluation of the Society Against Family Violence” and “Young Adults in the Bow Valley: An Exploration of Quality of Life”, in order to focus the comments and discussion directly to each organization and its specific interests.

2.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research was multidimensional. A major goal was to provide feedback from the community to SAFV and BSIN and to assist both organizations in the direction of future programs and initiatives. The research also provided an opportunity for young people to offer potential solutions with respect to some of the unique issues inherent in this population. Such information could assist SAFV and BSIN to better support these young people in the Bow Valley.

Other goals were to identify whether there was a need for SAFV’s services in the community and to determine the current awareness and profile of SAFV’s programs and initiatives in the Bow Valley. A further goal was to identify gaps, limitations and strengths of the current domestic violence services in the Bow Valley to assist SAFV in future planning. A final goal was to collect feedback on the efficacy of programs and initiatives currently delivered by SAFV to provide direction with respect to continuing or improving such endeavors.

The research was conducted by RESOLVE Alberta, a family violence research institute affiliated with the University of Calgary, in collaboration with the Research Advisory Team. RESOLVE Alberta is part of a tri-provincial research institute with additional offices in Manitoba (at the University of Manitoba) and Saskatchewan (at the

University of Saskatchewan). RESOLVE stands for Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse.

2.2 Research Methodology

The research advisory team examined several different evaluation methods to address its goals, including the possibility of conducting a survey in Banff and Canmore. However, because of the limited resources available for the project and because the team preferred to focus on in-depth comments from a limited number of individuals as compared to less comprehensive response from a larger number, we decided to utilize qualitative methodology. Qualitative evaluation methods are commonly used to conduct evaluations⁴. One limitation to this process is that one cannot assume that those who contributed the findings are representative of the entire population.

The research questions were designed to: 1) assess the awareness and opinions with respect to SAFV's programs and initiatives; and 2) gather feedback regarding quality of life, and violence and non-violence related issues to help identify potential needs of young adults.

The questions were devised by RESOLVE Alberta and the Research Advisory Team. Three sets of interview questions were designed for each of three subsets of participants (telephone interviews with *stakeholders*; focus groups with *adults* and focus groups with *young adults*). We used different sets of questions because of time-related issues (i.e. more in-depth questions were used for the individual interviews), but also to satisfy the research interests of both SAFV and BSIN (see Appendix I, II, and III for the interview schedules).

The *stakeholders* were individuals identified by the Research Advisory Team as having been involved either directly or peripherally with the Society Against Family Violence and/or the Banff Service Industry Network. They were invited to participate in the individual telephone interviews. .

The focus group participants were recruited through community organizations and local industries. Most of the participants for the adult focus group were recruited through their employment with human service agencies (they usually had had some form of contact with SAFV or BSIN), or through the hospitality industry (i.e. hotels). The first contact was most often through the human resource departments within the hospitality industry (such as hotels and restaurants) that invited staff members to participate in a focus group.

Ethical procedures to ensure confidentiality and informed consent were developed by the Research team and ratified by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Review Committee. An individual's decision to participate in the research was entirely voluntary, and no minors were included in the research.

⁴ Tutty, L., & Rothery, M. (2001). Needs assessment. In B. Thyer (Ed.), *Handbook of social work research* (pp. 161-175). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

The interviews and focus groups were tape-recorded and transcribed. We followed accepted practices of qualitative data analysis including identifying prominent themes and sub-themes.

2.3 Results

In total, 60 individuals participated in the research: 14 in stakeholder interviews, 24 in *young adult* (age 18-25) focus groups and 22 in *adult* (over age 25) in focus groups. The stakeholders were exclusively involved in individual telephone interviews. Of the 17 stakeholders contacted, 14 agreed to participate. The majority (11 of 14) were representatives from human services in the Bow Valley such as victims' services, mental health, community counsellors, family service agencies, job resources, probation, non-profit societies, and local hospitals. The remaining three stakeholders were from tourism-related industries. Eleven women and three men comprised the stakeholder subset.

Forty-six participants were involved in one of six focus groups. Of the 24 participants in one of four of the young adult focus groups, 20 were women and four were men. In the two focus groups for adults, there were 22 participants of which 14 were women and eight were men.

2.4 Major Themes and Sub-themes

The following section summarizes the results of the interviews and the focus groups. The Evaluation of the Society Against Family Violence findings rely more heavily on the data drawn from the interviews with 14 stakeholders and the two adult focus groups. Participants in the young adult sample demonstrated limited knowledge of SAFV and other support services in the Bow Valley. Consequently, we received only minimal feedback from the young adults. The limited information gathered from the young adults with respect to SAFV has been incorporated into the report where relevant. In qualitative research as presented here, it is important to remain mindful that quotes presented here are the personal opinions of the research participants. In addition, numbers and percentages cited in this research represent those research participants who expressed opinions with respect to a particular theme, and those participants who did not comment with respect to a particular theme are not necessarily in opposition to what was expressed by the other participants.

2.4.1 Involvement with SAFV

The stakeholders had been involved with SAFV for varied time periods from recent to historical. Several of the interview respondents had been involved since the initial conception of the Society Against Family Violence when it had changed from an interagency committee to a society with a board of directors. Ten stakeholders (70%) had been involved with SAFV for four or more years. Over the years, these individuals had tended to decrease their direct involvement with SAFV and interacted from more of a peripheral standpoint. Many of the stakeholders had worked in partnership with SAFV in various community initiatives, thus some of the feedback was based on actual interaction with SAFV.

The focus group participants were, not unexpectedly, less involved with and aware of SAFV than the stakeholders, aside from contact through referrals or as a resource and through community events. Many of the young adult focus group participants were aware of SAFV's existence, but only two had had any direct involvement with SAFV prior to the focus groups.

2.4.2 Awareness of SAFV

Prior to being contacted for the interview or focus group, 35 of the 36 stakeholders and adult focus group participants (97%) had heard of the Society Against Family Violence. The awareness of specifics with respect to SAFV's mandate and activities in the Bow Valley appeared to depend on the respondents' level and length of involvement: respondents with little to no involvement with SAFV had minimal knowledge of SAFV's activities in the community. In general though, most of the stakeholders and adult focus group participants were aware that SAFV is a domestic violence serving organization. Several respondents correctly identified SAFV's mandate as providing violence education and prevention. Others were aware of SAFV through the resource posters that had been distributed throughout the community. Some respondents knew that SAFV provides referral and resource services. Several respondents associated SAFV with programs at the YWCA in Banff, such as the emergency shelter and the movie night.

Many of the adult focus group participants had become aware of SAFV through community events or initiatives such as: AppreSHEation, to commemorate the women who were massacred in Montreal in 1989; One Hot Summer and/or One Cool Winter, job/resource fairs; Family Day; Community Health Day; International Womens' Day; and a Week Without Violence. The AppreSHEation event was the most prominent SAFV event in both Banff and Canmore. Nearly one third of respondents indicated their awareness of the AppreSHEation event. SAFV's partnerships with other organizations, in providing programs in the schools for building healthy relationships and anti-bullying, also received considerable recognition by stakeholders and adult focus group participants.

Slightly less than one half of the young adults had heard of SAFV prior to being contacted for the focus groups. Predominantly, however, most of these people were unclear about SAFV's mandate and activities in the community. Seeing as we did not ask participants to clarify the length of time that they had been living in the Bow Valley, the limited awareness may have been a reflection on participants having only lived in the community for a short period of time.

2.4.3 The Role of SAFV in the Bow Valley

The telephone interviews with community stakeholders included a unique question regarding the perceived role of SAFV in the community. Because the stakeholders had more in-depth experience with the society, we anticipated that they would have a clearer picture of the role of SAFV in the Bow Valley. The majority (13) saw SAFV's role as providing violence prevention and education to the community at large.

They are the trigger for awareness in the community – that there is an issue of family violence here. It is easy in this community to think that it doesn't happen because we don't come into personal contact with it. (Stakeholder)

A prevention service where their [SAFV's] role is to provide information to the community at large about what violence is and what it is not. To have information brochures and resource information available, as well as referral information for people who are in need of support. (Stakeholder)

Working with a multitude of groups, education has a huge benefit because it hopefully give people the ability to realize what situation they are in, or to realize situations that they may or may not be creating themselves and avoid those situations. (Stakeholder)

Four stakeholders highlighted SAFV's role in providing resources, information and referrals regarding violence in the community. Several discussed SAFV's engaging in collaborations with other community agencies in order to provide comprehensive services.

There are so many people who end up here for one reason or another, and it's a very difficult place to live, to make a living. People find themselves in a situation that is less than desirable. To have an agency that one could call on, get referrals from, would be invaluable. There is as much as a need here as there would be in a large city just because of the nature of the communities in Banff and Canmore because they're so transient. (Stakeholder)

The fact that they [SAFV] do have partnerships or work together with other organizations in the community helps with continuity of care for clients who might be needing services. (Stakeholder)

2.4.4 The Accomplishments of SAFV

Both the stakeholder and adult focus group participants were asked for their perceptions of the activities, initiatives, and operations of SAFV. A large number of respondents welcomed the opportunity to offer positive feedback to the work of the coordinator and the organization as a whole. Many respondents offered positive feedback with respect to the participation and role played by SAFV in community initiatives and interagency workshops such as AppreSHEation, Family Day, One Hot Summer/One Cool Winter, the S.O.S. workshop, and the Community Health Day. In addition, the research informants responded positively to and support SAFV's prevention and education work within the community, including in the schools.

[The coordinator's presentations] have been well-researched, well-presented, well thought out. He exudes confidence in his subject matter and a real passion. He gets people fired up in a very quiet way. He's very easy to reach, very easy to work with. (Adult focus group participant)

[The Coordinator] is truly committed and has unique ideas and perseveres. I want to make sure that those involved get thanked for their perseverance and ingenuity. (Stakeholder)

[SAFV Coordinator] helped in a high school production put on by the drama students. Those kinds of things are the most effective way of preventing violence in that age group – giving the kids something to look at and then having a discussion and talking about how they might change their behaviour after viewing it. (Stakeholder)

Several respondents discussed benefits of SAFV’s resource/referral posters and brochures, while others noted concerns regarding the ongoing monitoring and distribution of these.

They [resource referral posters] are essential. They are the only non-human point of contact for people that are looking for that information at the local level. They need to be maintained and kept in as many locations as possible. They need to be not just in the women’s washrooms, they need to be in the men’s washrooms. Those little tear-off parts need to be kept and the numbers changed, they need to be changed immediately. (Adult focus group participant)

The brochure and poster information is definitely helpful. The brochure information doesn’t seem to be automatically updated or given to us as agency members. That would be helpful if they would regularly distribute that information. Perhaps give us some written information about what SAFV is up to – what initiatives they are working on, so as a helping agency we can keep abreast of that. (Stakeholder)

2.2.5 Collaborations

SAFV’s collaborations with other community agencies received recognition from both stakeholders and adult focus group participants.

They are very small, only one staff person, under-budgeted, and limited resources, so it’s good to share resources. The partnerships [that] are developed by these programs could be really great but there is just not enough time, money or resources to go around to make those projects happen. There’s a lot of potential there in terms of connections and partnerships. (Adult focus group participant)

SAFV has a strong partnership in that [interagency grouping] and that’s where the strength comes in – the fact that there are a number of partnerships that allows them to work together and not in isolation. (Stakeholder)

2.3 Challenges for SAFV

Further to the question asked of stakeholders and adult focus group participants to share their perceptions of the activities, initiatives, and operations of SAFV, there were some concerns. The quotes appear to give the impression that many of the concerns for

SAFV may be rooted in the perception that SAFV is a worthy society in the community that they would like to see continue to provide services.

2.3.1 Insufficient funding

Predominantly, the stakeholders' and adult focus group participants' feedback focused on the problems inherent in a part-time staff position. Some linked the part-time position with challenges in securing sustained funding for the organization.

I would hope that there is still the opportunity to maintain those services and programs because their funding comes and goes. That's a real concern. There should be stable, predictable, expected funding for a program like that, which is that important in the community. (Stakeholder)

I was hoping for a full-fledged community initiative with community support, a solid community board and community interest regarding the issue. The board has been struggling since day one; they've had a hard time with funding. Their funders are telling them that the majority of the work has to be done in Banff and rightly so – Banff has a lot of issues around violence, and some of those issues are a little different than those in Canmore. Canmore has more family violence issues and Banff has more service industry worker/workplace issues. (Stakeholder)

That's a bit of a challenge given that you've got a part-time staffing position. In the five years that I've been here there's been three or four different people in the position. One of the challenges I've seen is that it's hard for people to keep up with getting those things done because with part-time positions there's not a lot of time. That is a challenge for the organization – with limited staff and a lot of turnover. (Adult focus group participant)

Like so many other non-profit community-based organizations that have a social mandate – there is no funding. If increasing the profile was the number one recommendation, then the only way to do that is to have someone full-time, five days a week, working on everything, and bringing the whole community together on a number of different levels. Until you really start to be a mainstay, working regular hours when a lot of people need you or when a lot of the contacts can be made, on some level the credibility isn't there or something. The broader community doesn't understand it as much when it's not as present as the other bigger organizations and businesses. (Stakeholder)

They [SAFV] needs to get all their ducks in order so they've got sustainable funding, a well-structured society, everybody knows their place within that structure, and there is a way to ensure that people are fulfilling their role within that structure. They need to get to that place, which will take several months. Once that base is in place, I see the need for SAFV to go out and be more aggressive in the community. (Stakeholder)

2.3.2 Low Profile

The second most prevalent theme was rooted in the relatively low profile of SAFV in the Bow Valley. The respondents described a lack of awareness of SAFV's services, and confusion surrounding SAFV's mandate, indicating that there may be a need to distinguish between the different stages of crisis intervention and prevention and education efforts in community services that focus on family violence. Of the 36 stakeholders and adult focus group participants, 12 (33%)⁵ perceived SAFV's low profile as a factor in limitations of domestic violence services and other community resources in the Bow Valley. The respondents were concerned that information is not reaching those who may need it the most.

Both adult focus group participants and stakeholders linked the society's low profile with funding deficits. Of the stakeholders and adult focus group participants, five of 36 (14%) identified the funding shortfall as a major contributor to gaps in service. The respondents related this to not having a full-time SAFV Coordinator position and the resulting difficulty maintaining consistent services.

A full-time employee certainly could have a good start on the limitations. There is a lot of partnering and media expertise that is required. (Adult focus group participant)

One of the on-going big things is the transient nature of the people here. You have people come in, usually with a lot of baggage, and they may erupt before you even have an opportunity for intervention. Also due to the transient nature, a lot of times you won't be able to do the follow-up to confirm any kind of impact of your intervention. (Stakeholder)

We have Victim's Services, a shelter and the Society Against Family Violence, all of which have very specific and unique responsibilities. It's [SAFV] the agency that does the proactive work. It would be a good thing if there were a way in terms of profile, having three different sets of profiles so that people who are looking for proactive information or bullying in schools they could go to SAFV. They could go to Victim's Services or the shelters for something else. (Adult focus group participant)

It would be beneficial for SAFV to spend some time doing advocacy work, in terms of their own benefit, to raise community awareness that they are really essential in the community, and that if there's not funding to allow them to continue, the programs are going to be even less. The state of the communities is that there needs to be more programs and not less. Advocacy is probably the only way to make that clear to the community, that there needs to be more support, including financial support. (Adult focus group participant)

⁵ Note that there are no responses from young adult focus group participants, therefore percentages are based only on information from stakeholders and adult focus group participants (n=36). Unless stated otherwise, this applies to all subsequent sections.

[SAFV] is wondering if it is going to continue the way that it is with not enough support. SAFV has held on really strongly throughout the years. This community needs it and wants it – and we need to try to make that happen. (Adult focus group participant)

I've been living in Canmore for four months and I've never heard of SAFV. I don't think the communication is very effective. (Adult focus group participant)

It may be that they need a higher profile. There may be people who are afraid to ask for help and need that additional support, and not knowing that there is that society with people ready to help and provide them with information. We might be missing out on a whole slice of the population. (Stakeholder)

2.3.3 Presence in Banff and Canmore

Several respondents recognized problems associated with the division between the Banff and Canmore communities, particularly with respect to events and/or mandates intended to serve the entire Bow Valley.

One of the difficulties living in the Bow Valley is (that) the location of the event is everything. If it happens in Canmore then Banff won't cover it and vice versa. There's that real distinction between the communities. Even if it's a Bow Valley event, it's never really identified as one. It's a constant struggle trying to stay Bow Valley. (Adult focus group participant)

The issue that has come up with the distinction between communities is a huge one with trying to provide programs that are going to be effective. That has been a dilemma for SAFV for the entire time; and the pull of funding as well. A large source of funding comes from the YWCA so they have particular things that they want to happen. There can be political tensions that happen between these two communities that end up being major roadblocks in the work that you do. That is something that really needs to be overcome. It just means that you don't end up doing the work that you should be doing. (Adult focus group participant)

2.4 Limitations and Gaps in Service

The stakeholder and adult focus group participants were asked to identify limitations and/or gaps of service of the violence-serving network in the Bow Valley. The gaps and limitations identified included: gaps in comprehensive domestic violence services; services to minority groups, seniors, and with respect to diversity issues

2.4.1 Gaps in Comprehensive Domestic Violence Services

Of the 36 stakeholders and adult focus group participants, 14 (39%) identified gaps in services to provide assistance in transition, follow-up, second stage housing, and continuity of service for those impacted by domestic violence issues. Both adult focus group participants and stakeholders commented that the lack of comprehensive services is a major concern, since many people must leave the Bow Valley to access appropriate resources.

One gap is second stage housing in the Bow Valley. It is extremely difficult for people who are leaving relationships to make a go of it because a lot of times there are financial limitations. That is often why they stay in abusive relationships – they have three kids and if they walk out the door they have no where to go, so that will make them stay. A lot of times it is difficult to stay around the Bow Valley because it is too expensive to do so. (Stakeholder)

Issues of transition with regard to service provision – how people move from one service to another service. Supposing a family accesses one of the safe houses within the Valley – where do they go from there? Are there follow-up services provided for the family or individual? How do they get connected? So, generalizing the safety needs of the person after they have been identified as in need of services. (Stakeholder)

There are a lot of gaps in terms of continuity. SAFV could play a role in regard to a support group or some sort of more formal group where they provide life skills or assertiveness training or communication group. There aren't as many supports as there could be. When they [women] want to leave a situation, quite often it is Calgary that takes that on. (Stakeholder)

The respondents identified services to minority groups, seniors, and with respect to diversity issues, as further gaps in domestic violence services in the Bow Valley. Several stakeholders commented on the unavailability of resources and services for domestic violence offenders, with this population also needing to leave the Bow Valley for services. One participant discussed the limited focus on domestic violence education and prevention in the traditional family unit, including an insufficient number of parenting programs to teach non-violent strategies.

2.5 Community Recommendations for SAFV Future Directions

The adult focus group participants and stakeholders were asked to provide solutions for filling gaps of services; to describe SAFV's role in the community; and to indicate programs and initiatives that SAFV could be providing or supporting. Given that SAFV operates on a part-time basis with limited funding, it is important to remain mindful that recommendations listed here can include areas that SAFV could lend support to through collaborations with other agencies. The responses fit the following themes: campaign for a higher profile of SAFV in the Bow Valley; focus on existing and additional activities; collaborations in resources and initiatives; and equal representation of SAFV's services in both Banff and Canmore.

2.5.1 Campaign for a Higher Profile for SAFV in the Bow Valley

| Recommendation | Stakeholder/Adult Focus Group Participants Support (n=36) |
|---|---|
| Higher Profile | 32/36 (89%) |
| Continue and Improve Programs & Initiatives | 24/36 (67%) |
| Collaborations | 14/36 (38%) |
| Banff/Canmore Presence | 5/36 (14%) |

An overwhelming number of comments from the adult focus groups and the stakeholder participants indicated the need to improve and increase the public profile of the Society Against Family Violence. Of the 36 adult focus group participants and stakeholders, 32 expressed concern about the low profile of SAFV throughout the Bow Valley (89%). They recommended the development of mass media and public awareness campaigns directed at the Bow Valley population at large. They emphasized the need for SAFV’s programs and domestic violence services to reach more of the diverse and minority groups in the population (people from Aboriginal; French; Japanese backgrounds; gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, trans-gendered people; religious groups; and youth/young adults). The respondents suggested that an effective way of connecting with the community could be through direct contact from the SAFV Coordinator to raise awareness of and improve SAFV’s profile. The lack of awareness of SAFV within the young adult sample adds further support for elevating SAFV’s profile with the population at large.

The more you promote it [violence and abuse] as being wrong and the more you bring it out in the open, the people involved become accountable. There needs to be a higher profile that this type of behaviour will be exposed and dealt with, not hidden away and condoned. It is a long term societal change, but if they keep the profile high in that direction, eventually you will move in that direction. If the profile drops, it again becomes almost accepted and never does move in that direction. (Stakeholder)

We need to get that [domestic violence] information out. We are not dealing with a stable population. Everybody is moving, every three to six months you have to re-educate everybody upwards of 5,000 new employees. Logistically that is a big problem. People have been coming and going so rapidly and no one knows the services that are available. (Adult focus group participant)

Supplying a program for the 18-24 year olds – the numbers are phenomenal. Because of the living conditions and the party scene, it would be nice to have an event to really disseminate information or raise awareness. (Stakeholder)

One of the things we want to be careful of is that everybody is coming at the youth as if they’re one big problem, and it is a very negative approach – you’re broken

and we'll fix you; you have a problem and we'll come up with the answer. It would be nice to see a more positive and empowering approach. They are often given a program rather than brought on board to design a program. I think we need to start giving a message to the kids that we trust you, we believe in you, and we want you to be part of the solution. (Stakeholder)

Having a personalized connection with people rather than just a poster may attract most people who need help who are out there. [SAFV] needs to go out there and grasp those people rather than wait for them to come to [the organization]. (Adult focus group participant)

This all comes back to outreach. There is a real chain when somebody is in this situation and it is the breaking of the chain that is the most important thing. That's where the outreach is really important: the advertising; the confidence; the trust; are all the important things that make it successful and that's where the ripple effect starts happening. People will learn that they can do [to agencies like SAFV] and do something about it. (Adult focus group participant)

It seems like the name, Society Against Family Violence, excludes me. (Young adult focus group participant)

If you hear the name without having an idea what they do, you think it doesn't concern you. (Young adult focus group participant)

Maybe if it was more known what kind of services they provided, like how they could help you, you would be more interested in contacting them. (Young adult focus group participant)

2.5.2 Continue to Improve Programs and Initiatives

The adult focus group participants and stakeholders supported the continuation of SAFV's existing programs and suggested incorporating additional services. Again, some recommendations could only be addressed through collaborations with other agencies, given SAFV's limited funding. In total, 24 of the 36 adult respondents (67%) offered suggestions with respect to additions. As mentioned previously, a major identified gap in service is a lack of transition and follow-up support for women and children leaving abusive relationships in the Bow Valley. Some respondents suggested that SAFV could play a role in implementing and/or advocating these supports. Another identified gap in service is the lack of resources for domestic violence offenders. The participants indicated a need for conflict management and/or anger management programs for offenders and for the broader community. Again, SAFV was seen as having a role in assisting in the implementation or development of such programs. Other recommendations centered on providing groups for women (ie. assertiveness, self-esteem, psycho-educational support) and more presentations to other helping agencies to keep them abreast of SAFV's activities.

If the majority of family violence is husband and wife or spousal and partner, then maybe [SAFV] to hold some kind of proactive event in educating men on how

they are supposed to deal with conflict with their partners. (Adult focus group participant)

Conflict resolution is something that the two-year-old as well as the 85-year-old can learn. Those are the kind of activities I can see SAFV involved in. (Adult focus group participant)

SAFV would be a place that could get a handle on the reasons for the violence occurring and hopefully put some proactive programs in place before it becomes a matter for the criminal courts. We have a number of people at the bottom of the cliff to pick people up when they fall off, but maybe they [SAFV] could move people back from the edge. (Stakeholder)

Both adult focus group participants and stakeholders strongly recommended that violence education such as anti-bullying programs and relationship education needs to continue to be an integral component of services provided in schools. Of the 36 stakeholders and adult focus group participants, 14 (38%) supported school-based prevention and education initiatives. Respondents provided positive feedback about the programs that SAFV has facilitated (or co-facilitated) in the schools, and would like to see these initiatives both continue and expand.

The program in the school had a good response from students and staff. I would like to see programs such as that expanded and become core curriculum for students to have relationship education as part of their studies. (Stakeholder)

If you targeted kids and violence, you would see kids not repeating the behaviour patterns of their parents. (Stakeholder)

2.5.3 Continued Collaboration

Both the stakeholders and adult focus group participants provided encouragement for SAFV to continue with its present collaborations and to seek out more partnerships in future (14 of 36, or 38%). Most responses centered on the belief that collaborations between service providers assist in continuity and comprehension of services and help to maximize limited resources. Note that such collaborations are recommended both with other human service agencies and employers in order to ensure that services are made available to the population at large, particularly to the young adults who fall between the cracks.

The partnerships with other organizations are the way of the future. We have to really start looking at which organizations can partner up to share resources and overall build on each other's strengths. That probably means that we should be pulling together a think tank for non-profits with a social conscience in the Bow Valley and looking at the next ten years, looking at the trends that have been happening over the last few years and predicting where we need to go. (Stakeholder)

It might be worthwhile exploring the periods of overlap between SAFV and the other organizations. Seek a funding partnership and initiatives to do something together. It might be a better way of addressing [the issues] and getting more educational opportunities out there. (Adult focus group participant)

There are so many non-profit groups in this town who all get funded from basically the same pot of money. They should get together and have a brainstorming session to determine what continuing education could be provided such as labour laws, health and personal safety issues. (Adult focus group participant)

Maybe if there were a few higher profile businesses that took it on as their role to promote the whole mandate of SAFV to their staff, etc. Businesses are the highest profile around here – money and business seem to speak loud and clear around here. (Adult focus group participant)

2.5.4 An Increased Presence of SAFV in both Banff and Canmore

Five adult focus group participants and stakeholders (14%) would like to see an improved presence of SAFV in both Banff and Canmore given that the society is mandated to serve the entire Bow Valley. Banff and Canmore have several key differences in the demographics of their communities (Canmore with a larger proportion of traditional family) so there may be need to be some variation in service provision between the two communities. It was apparent throughout the interviews and focus groups that the part-time nature of the Coordinator position interfered in the ability of SAFV to have a presence in both communities, let alone the entire Bow Valley.

The two communities need two funding pools and two part-time people that can collaborate together and pull the agencies and the people together. (Adult focus group participant)

Perhaps part of the solution would be the organization setting limits on how much funding they will receive from each community and make sure it never exceeds 50%. It definitely puts the onus on the organization to have shared funding but also they can only spend 50% of their time in each community without having the pull. (Over age 25 focus group participant)

We need support from both communities [Banff and Canmore]. Banff is already on board, if there was something on the other side of it [in Canmore] it would be much more effective. (Adult focus group participant)

It needs to be done through more and smaller organizations in Canmore because the town is structured differently than in Banff. There is not one big player; there are lots of little players. The problem is that the SAFV position is part-time; it is a lot of legwork to get known. There is not one large organization that taps the community because we're so much more diverse. [Canmore] has a large seniors group, large working adult group, a large kid group and now a growing young

workers population. All of those groups are connected to different organizations.
(Adult focus group participant)

2.5.5 *The Future Success of SAFV*

In their individual telephone interviews, the stakeholders were asked to identify how they would know that SAFV has been successful. The responses indicated that, for SAFV to demonstrate success in the Bow Valley, it would be firmly established in the community, would have a strong presence in schools, community members would comprehend issues of violence and a continuity of domestic violence services would exist for all family members.

[SAFV] would be established and could spend time on programming as opposed to surviving. (Stakeholder)

SAFV would become a thread in the curriculum in junior high and high and high school and be participating actively in the curriculum. (Stakeholder)

[SAFV] would grow to provide more programming. That there is a facility from beginning to end for all involved, not necessarily a full-blown shelter, but in a family situation, something for the woman, for the man, for the children – shelter, counselling, education, and follow-up. (Stakeholder)

2.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Society Against Family Violence has had a relatively short history and one that has been characterized by a lack of continuity in organization, support and leadership. The relative stability over the last 15 months has resulted in a beginning awareness of what such a society could accomplish with the support and input of the Bow Valley community. The large majority of the discussions, debates and suggestions of the sixty individuals who participated in the research support the ideas and the current initiatives of the society.

This research project provided several unique opportunities for input into future direction for the society, especially by inviting residents of the Bow Valley community to share their ideas and impressions. The research informants had a range of involvement with SAFV and, as a result, offered diverse feedback from differing perspectives. The qualitative interviews and focus groups allowed respondents to offer in-depth feedback and to elaborate on their experiences and opinions. The focus groups provided a unique environment that facilitates dialogue between community members. Interestingly, this content of the discussion was consistent across the focus groups, lending credibility to the information provided.

One limitation of the current research must be mentioned. We had anticipated receiving more feedback from young adults regarding potential solutions for SAFV to more effectively cater to their unique needs. Their lack of knowledge about SAFV certainly suggests a focus for recommended changes for the society.

The research participants made a number of general suggestions with respect to improving and consolidating the society in the Bow Valley. These recommendations all entail the need to secure sustained and dependable funding for the organization, a central concern of the research participants. They also imply the need for the SAFV Coordinator position to be full- rather than part-time. Perhaps these recommendations may be useful to other agencies in the Bow Valley, given that SAFV's funding may not be so extensive as to support additional programming. Also, these recommendations may be considered for future collaborations between human service agencies in the Bow Valley. The major recommendations for SAFV derived from the research participants include support to:

- Improve SAFV's profile across the Bow Valley and to all members of the population. It was suggested that efforts be made to discriminate and clarify the different agencies and stages of intervention for family violence services in the Bow Valley, as part of improvements to SAFV's profile. One suggestion about how to achieve this goal is to develop mass media and public awareness campaigns directed at the Bow Valley population at large. With respect to the young adult community, expanding the number of society presentations directly to young adults, and developing creative ways to engage this population, could ensure that these young people are included in the "family" component of Society Against Family Violence.
- Continue with and improve existing programs and initiatives. The respondents strongly recommended that violence education such as anti-bullying programs and relationship education should continue as an integral component of the SAFV services provided in schools.
- Continue to collaborate with other agencies and organizations in order to provide more comprehensive services and/or to share limited funding resources. Collaborations could include agencies that serve more diverse and/or distinct facets of the population with respect to culture, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.
- Enhance the presence of SAFV in both Banff and Canmore. This suggests that SAFV needs to consider differences in the demographics of their communities in the service provision. Given that Canmore has a larger population of more traditional family units, services to Canmore could be more "family" oriented, while services in Banff could be directed to the more non-traditional "family" found in roommate, intimate partner, and peer relationships. It was clear that the part-time nature of the Coordinator position interfered in the ability of SAFV to have a presence in both communities, let alone the entire Bow Valley.
- Support or coordinate additional initiatives into SAFV work or advocacy efforts. This could include assisting in the needs assessment for the development of transition and follow-up support for women and children leaving abusive relationships; second stage housing; resources for domestic

violence offenders; conflict management and/or anger management programs for offenders and for the broader community

The respondents noted a number of ways in which SAFV was already demonstrating success in meeting its mandate of violence prevention and education in the Bow Valley. However, the society needs core funding for a full-time coordinator position to more fully and realistically accomplish its goals and to create a higher profile in both Banff and Canmore. SAFV already has a strong presence in schools and this might be expanded in future. Finally SAFV is in a unique position to promote the development of comprehensive services for all family members affected by domestic violence.

Appendix I: Interview Questions for Stakeholders

1. With what agency are you affiliated?
2. Have you heard of the Society Against Family Violence?
 - What do you know about the work of the Society Against Family Violence?
3. Are you affiliated in any way with the SAFV, and if so, how are you involved?
 - What is the nature of your involvement with the SAFV?
 - How long have you been involved?
 - What did you hope to accomplish through becoming involved with the SAFV?
4. How do you view the work of SAFV?
 - How do you see their role in the community?
 - What activities/programs/initiatives should they be providing/supporting?
 - Do you see SAFV meeting a need in the community?
5. What activities and/or initiatives of SAFV are you aware of in your community?
 - What activities and/or initiatives did you find the most/least helpful?
6. What do/did you hope that SAFV could accomplish?
 - How successfully have these goals been met?
7. What do you see has the major strengths of the family violence community in the Bow Valley region?
8. Can you identify any limitations and/or gaps of services in the area of violence prevention and education the Bow Valley region?
9. Do you have any recommendations for how SAFV could better promote violence prevention and education within the Bow Valley region?
10. If the Society Against Family Violence were to be successful over the next few years, what would be different in the Bow Valley region?
11. Do you have any additional comments or overall feedback regarding the operations and/or activities of SAFV over the past year?
12. Now we want to focus on the issue of youth/young people and violence. What are the major issues pertaining to young people and violence within the Bow Valley area? (Note: “youth/young people” are defined for the purposes of this study as age 16-30).
 - Are these needs/issues currently being addressed? Explain.
 - How can these needs/issues be better addressed?
13. When serving young people (through your organization), can you identify any major gaps or issues in the support services available to this group in the Bow Valley area?
 - These gaps and/or issues can be specific to violence or non-violence issues.
 - Are these gaps and/or issues currently being addressed? Explain.
 - How can these gaps and/or issues be better addressed?

Appendix II: Interview Questions for Adult Focus Group Participants

1. Have you heard of the Society Against Family Violence?
 - What do you know about the work of the Society Against Family Violence?
2. Have you had any contact with SAFV?
 - What has been the nature of your involvement with SAFV?
 - What has this involvement accomplished?
 - Has this involvement been successful? If so, how? If not, why?
3. What specific activities and/or initiatives of SAFV are you aware of in your community?
 - Did you find these helpful/not helpful? Explain?
4. Are there other activities/programs/initiatives that you would like to see SAFV providing/supporting?
5. Can you identify any limitations and/or gaps of services in the area of violence prevention and education in the Bow Valley region (*or specific to their own area*)?
6. Do you think SAFV is able to address these limitations and or gaps in the community? How? Explain?
7. Do you have any recommendations for how SAFV could better promote violence prevention and education within the Bow Valley region (i.e. what areas/issues should SAFV focus on)?
8. Do you have any additional comments or overall feedback regarding the operations and/or activities of SAFV?
9. Now we want to focus on the issue of youth/young people and violence. What are the major issues pertaining to young people and violence within the Bow Valley area? (Note: “youth/young people” are defined for the purposes of this study as age 16-30).
 - Are these needs/issues currently being addressed? Explain.
 - How can these needs/issues be better addressed?
10. When serving young people (through your organization), can you identify any major gaps or issues in the support services available to this group in the Bow Valley area?
 - These gaps and/or issues can be specific to violence or non-violence issues.
 - Are these gaps and/or issues currently being addressed? Explain.
 - How can these gaps and/or issues be better addressed?

Appendix III: Interview Questions for Young Adult Participants

- 1.) What do you see as the major issues impacting the quality of life for young people in the Bow Valley area?
 - These can be specific to violence or non-violence issues. (i.e. workplace violence, drugs/alcohol, etc.)
- 2.) Are these issues being addressed? If so, how?
- 3.) Can you discuss some possible solutions to these issues?
- 4.) Can you identify any major gaps or issues within the support services offered specifically to young people in the Bow Valley area? (i.e. prompts).
 - These gaps and/or issues can be specific to violence or non-violence issues.
 - Are these gaps and/or issues currently being addressed? Explain.
 - How can these gaps and/or issues be better addressed?
- 5.) What are the major issues pertaining to youth and violence within the Bow Valley area?
 - Are these needs/issues currently being addressed? Explain.
 - How can these needs/issues be better addressed?
- 6.) Is the non-reporting of the issues that we've just talked about today/tonight a problem in the Bow Valley area?
 - What are the barriers to reporting issues?
 - Do you have suggestions for how to reduce the barriers to reporting issues?
- 7.) Have you heard of the Society Against Family Violence?
 - What do you know about the work of the Society Against Family Violence?
 - Do you think that SAFV would/could be helpful in assisting you to address the problems you have discussed above?
 - Do you know of any *other* organizations and/or services that could assist you to address the problems you have discussed above?