



## The Next Steps

Work continues on in the Custody and Access Project beyond the publication of this report. Much of the material written about is work in progress. Committee members will continue to seek input from others in our community, in the province, and in the country, to further develop the ideas and materials in this document. There are other areas identified for discussion and work. Some ideas need to be tested "in action". The material presented becomes a "living document" when it is used to help ensure the safety and quality of life of woman abuse survivors and their children.

The work of the Steering Committee, the consultant, the four working groups, and focus group participants will proceed. Funding has been received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in response to a joint proposal submitted by the Custody and Access Project and the Violence Prevention Council in Durham Region. Funds have been provided to assist both groups in continuing their work from May 2000 to November 2000.

Members of the community will be supported in developing and visioning a five year plan to work toward creating a seamless system that will promote the safety and well being of woman abuse survivors and their children. With feedback from the community, priorities will be set and related funding proposals developed to carry out work in key areas over the next five years. This encompasses both community and justice responses and includes continuing innovative work with custody and access issues in woman abuse cases.

Work over the next seven months includes ongoing revisions and updates of the Woman Abuse Protocol for Durham Region, including feedback from an Advisory Committee comprised of Deaf women and women who are disabled. It is also our hope to dialogue actively with various multicultural groups in our community. As well as work identified by each of the four working groups in the Custody and Access Project, discussion will also take place about police training and supervised access.

Dialogue will take place about the possible integration of work of the Violence Prevention Council and this project "Custody and Access Issues of Woman Abuse Survivors and their Children". A web site has been created to share the work of both groups and make it more available electronically.

In the past, Durham Region has demonstrated a unique ability to bring together people from a wide range of disciplines along with survivors to increase understanding and develop coordinated responses to woman abuse survivors, their partners, and their children. As members of this community, we continue to develop our ability to listen, to actively find solutions together, and to hold foremost the needs and safety of woman abuse survivors and their children. The work continues.