

June 2021 Update

Transforming Together - Building system capacity to address the needs of the GBV service users

As we entered the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic and approached the half way point of the project, we realized we needed to make a course correction on rolling out the Transforming Together project activities that took into account the impact of the pandemic on the project partners. This has meant centering the project activities on addressing challenges and changes needed to improve the client experience identified by the ten family violence shelters who are members of MAWS.

Individual interviews with the shelter executive directors took place over May and June. We explored with them challenges they were facing and where possible the supports that the Transforming Together project could provide were identified and a plan to move forward with change was made.

What we learned are that some of the challenges are unique to a shelter given its location and community issues but most are systemic issues that are experienced across the province. As we move forward with the individual plans, the learnings will be shared, solutions to problems identified and scaled across the shelter system to bring about systemic change.

Examples of the issues being addressed and work being done include:

Challenges Protection Order Designates face. Relationship with the A/Manager for the POD program at Justice Manitoba has been built. Representatives of Brandon service providers, including the shelter, will meeting with her to explore the challenges and problem solve the issues PODs experience in the courts to enhance protection of survivors.

Relationships with Police. In many of the areas of the province, relationships with police could be improved. A project between the Winnipeg Police Service and Victim Witness services designed to better support families experiencing domestic violence that will see specialized staff from Manitoba Justice co-located at WPS headquarters to facilitate a more co-ordinated response is being monitored with a view to adaptation of the project in Brandon.

Building relationships with health care/medical service providers in Winnipeg. Willow Place and Ikwe Widdjiitiwin, supported by Transforming Together, are working to address the problems associated referrals to the shelters from the hospitals. Building better understanding of the mandate and capacity of the shelters with the hospitals is being addressed.

Increasing capacity to deliver culturally appropriate services. Transforming Together brought together the Portage shelter ED and representatives of Circling Buffalo to support the shelter in building relationships with the surrounding First Nations. This led to a relationship with a trauma trained elder who now visits the shelter on a regular basis to support the Indigenous clients and staff.

As seen from the above, Transforming Together is a catalyst in building new relationships that build capacity to transform services through cooperation and collaboration and new ways of working together.