

Network News



A Look Inside

Page 2

How to Contact APIN

Pages 2-4

Manitoba's Sexually Exploited Youth Strategy & Marymound's Program

Neâh Kee Papa ("I Am Your Father") & Ma Mawi Father's Group

Page 4

APIN 2005 Conference - Dr. Richard MacKenzie

Who Are We?

The Adolescent Parent Interagency Network (APIN) is a network of Manitoba professionals who meet monthly with the goal of ensuring high quality service to pregnant and parenting adolescents. The Network helps facilitate the sharing of information related to existing services and resources.

Come to the APIN March meeting & April 2005 conference to learn about...

March 8th, 2005 Meeting

- Presentation:** RESPECTED: VIOLENCE AND ABUSE PREVENTION
- Date & Time:** Tuesday, March 8th, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
- Place:** Canadian Red Cross
1111 Portage Ave
- Parking:** Available on Portage Avenue, in lot at back of building or possibly in the parking lot of the Palomino Club next door
- Speaker(s):** **Marian Hijkoop**
Winnipeg Program Coordinator for RespectedED
- Description:** RespectedED has been helping to promote healthier relationships and safer communities since 1984. Built on decades of Red Cross experience in prevention education and community-based safety programs, this award-winning service has helped more than one million Canadian youth and adults understand abuse, harassment and interpersonal violence issues.

April 15th, 2005 Conference

- Theme:** UNDERSTANDING AND HELPING ADOLESCENTS
- Date & Time:** Friday, April 15th, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Place:** **Blue & Gold Room, Canad Inns Stadium**
1465 Maroons Rd (between Empress and St. James St. facing the old Winnipeg Arena and the new Famous Players theatres)
- Parking:** Plenty of parking available in the lot next to the Blue & Gold Room (part of Canad Inns Stadium parking)
- Featuring:** **Dr. Richard MacKenzie**
- Description:** Please refer to the notice on page 4 for conference details.

Regular monthly meetings start promptly at noon. Please bring your own lunch to the March presentation (coffee and tea will be provided).



Report on the January & February 2005 Presentations

Sexually Exploited Youth Strategy (January 2005)

At the January meeting, Wendy Scheirich and Amanda Machalek presented on Manitoba's Sexually Exploited Youth Strategy and Marymound's related programming. Wendy Scheirich works with Family and Housing (Child Protection Branch) as Coordinator of the Manitoba Strategy responding to children and youth involved in sexual exploitation.

As directed by the Manitoba Government's Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, a multi-jurisdictional committee was appointed to implement a strategy to address the issue of sexual exploitation of children and youth in Manitoba. The strategy was officially announced on December 11, 2002.

The strategy's goals and objectives are to prevent or reduce the incidence of child and youth sexual exploitation by: increasing general awareness of the issue; promoting specialized training for frontline workers; addressing underlying issues and systemic gaps; developing an effective perpetrator response; and collaborating with stakeholders.

APIN Network News

is published six times per year for the network of Manitoba professionals working to ensure high quality service to pregnant and parenting adolescents.

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Ericia Snell, Healthy Start for Mom & Me	949-4801

For the purposes of the strategy: "Child or Youth Exploitation is the act of coercing, luring or engaging a child, under the age of 18, into a sexual act, and involvement in the sex trade or pornography, with or without the child's consent, in exchange for money, drugs, shelter, food, protection or other necessities."

Sexual exploitation statistics:

- 5% of women have had some involvement in the sex trade
- 70% of women involved began their involvement as a youth (some males are also involved)
- average entry age is 14.5 years
- approximately 400 youth are involved in the visible sex trade in Winnipeg (plus thousands more in the invisible sex trade, e.g. drug houses, private homes, etc.)
- most are introduced by another youth who is involved, while other entry points include johns, pimps, drug dealers, gang members, taxi drivers, and sometimes family members where there is intergenerational involvement
- 70% admit to a history of sexual abuse
- 30% become pregnant as a youth (it is estimated that 30% of those chose to parent)

Amanda Machalek is Program Manager for Sexually Exploited Youth programming at Marymound. She oversees two specialized treatment homes in the community and also provides training opportunities and other information on working with sexually exploited youth to staff in other program and service areas for both Marymound and the larger community.

Machalek recalled six years ago when Marymound staff were working with a young woman involved in the sex trade. They had no idea how to intervene or respond.

"We felt frustrated and helpless as we thought this youth was choosing to continue in this high risk lifestyle. We looked at her going to a more equipped resource as this was unknown territory to us. In retrospect, it was more about us than her. We were very judgmental."

From that time on, Marymound's Rose Hall residential treatment home noticed an increase in the number of young women who had been sexually exploited on the street. Program workers realized they needed to do more to address the underlying issues making these young people so vulnerable.

Over the past two years, through the Manitoba Strategy, the Marymound Sexually Exploited Youth Program was developed to meet the needs of their youth and to be a resource within their agency, in partnership with its Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program, and to the larger community.

Machalek noted that half their team at Rose Hall are "experiential" workers, who provide a message and symbol of hope for the youth still caught up in the sex trade. They find that women are more open to talking about sexual exploitation than about sexual abuse until trust is established. In fact, many do not see themselves as sexually exploited. Marymound has a therapist on site who works two days per week with the program and focuses on relationship building with the young women.

Scheirich noted that pregnancy and motherhood are *the* key turning points for intervention. Many of the sexually exploited youth become pregnant from their boyfriends, not their johns.

“Many conflicting emotions flood forward as they want to be good moms. Motherhood can bring judgments from others, and create internal conflict such as desiring to be a loving mother versus the shameful self, with internal messages such as I am nothing but a prostitute.”

The shame acts as a lens through which they see others as being judgmental and which prevents them from disclosing being exploited, for fear they may lose their child to the system.

Entering the sex trade isolates the youth from the people they need most to assist them when they parent. At times, even when the family knows about the exploitation and the youth becomes pregnant, they do not want to be involved. Some families choose to support the youth after learning of the pregnancy but unrealistic expectations often result in failure, and the youth can wind up homeless.

“It is important that when a youth who is parenting continues to be involved in the sex trade, that workers not view them as a bad mom. She needs to hear she is a good mom who is doing the best she can. However, she needs to always be aware that the safety of her child comes first no matter what,” noted Scheirich.

For the mom who resists accessing respite, it is important to remember that many of these youth were victims of child sexual abuse, some while in a foster home. She may resist any form of childcare arrangement for fear that her child will be abused.

Sexually exploited youth are more likely to be using hard drugs, which can interfere with their ability to parent. Harm reduction models work well when exploring treatment options for addictions.

Media Awareness Initiative

Working with the media to increase sensitivity to youth involved in the sex trade as victims, the “Media Awareness Initiative about Sexually Exploited Youth” will be launched in the near future. To get involved in the organizing committee, contact Deborah Zanke, Development and Communications Coordinator for Marymount, at 336-5505 or email: dzanke@marymount.com.

Here are just a few examples of the indicators of a youth’s vulnerability to or level of involvement in trading sex for money, goods or services:

- Controlled by boyfriend
- Uses hard substances, especially crack cocaine or crystal meth
- Unexplained access to money, alcohol/drugs or other goods
- Frequents expensive restaurants without the means to do so
- Receives provocative clothing or other expensive items as gifts
- Receives phone calls from older men, unknown men late at night, or phone calls where the caller hangs up
- Gets picked up in drug house raids
- Lives in sex trade area
- Hangs out with other youth known to be involved with sex trade
- Has a pager or cell phone given to them by an unknown source
- Experiences frequent sexual assaults
- Uses common street language

(For a complete list, contact Wendy Scheirich or Amanda Machalek.)

Actions you can take:

- Be knowledgeable, comfortable and nonjudgmental
- Ask parents or guardians about evidence of any of these behaviours
- Ask if they have suspicions about their child’s vulnerability to sexual exploitation or involvement in the sex trade
- Alert parents/guardians if you suspect the youth might be sexually exploited
- Ask the youth directly or indirectly about their activities or involvement

- Have a list of resources available to give to the parent, guardian or youth depending on the situation

- Recruit experiential workers or mentors for your agency

For more information, contact Wendy Scheirich, Manitoba Strategy Coordinator, at (204)945-5055/6964 or Amanda Machalek at Marymount at (204)471-4987.

Neâh Kee Papa (February 2005)

Elizabeth Denny is the program coordinator for Neâh Kee Papa (“I Am Your Father”) at Metis Child and Family Support Services. Terry McCharles and Kyle Monkman work as facilitators.

The program objectives are to:

- Identify resources within the community to support fathers
- Empower fathers to assert their rights
- Encourage healthy family relationships
- Enhance the parenting and life skills of fathers
- Promote healthy lifestyle choices
- Empower fathers to provide positive emotional support to their children
- Broaden the understanding of children’s emotional, behavioural and physical well-being

The program consists of 9 flexible units that are delivered to participants over 12-14 sessions, depending on the needs and interests of each group. Examples include a discussion of the father’s role, proactive parenting, life skills, health and sexuality (which covers a wide range of topics over 2-3 sessions with guest speakers usually from SERC and Public Health), your family and the law (which includes a guest speaker from Legal Aid), effective communication, anger management, job readiness, and graduation/family fun night. Alternate units include the effects of foster care on children and gang awareness. Facilitators are also open to suggestions from participants.

Sessions last 2-3 hours and take place twice per week. Fathers of all ages and backgrounds are accepted through any type of referral.

At program’s end, participants are awarded certificates of completion and a wallet card. They are allowed to miss up to three sessions and still receive a certificate.

“These are really cherished by the fathers, especially the wallet cards that they can pull out and show to others,” said Denny. “It validates them and makes them feel credible as fathers.”

Denny noted they do not have trouble attracting fathers to the program and

offered the following key factors to help maintain attendance in a father's group:

- Stress confidentiality to create a safe, sharing environment
- Build rapport with each of the dads
- Use ice-breakers (e.g. games)
- Gain trust – share (carefully) personal experiences as fathers
- Maintain a one-on-one connection with each dad
- Remind each dad they are important as individuals
- Reinforce to dads that they can teach facilitators as much as they can learn from them
- Greet each dad individually
- Promote connections between dads
- Provide a meal
- Ensure the material is relevant and useful (address issues that dads encounter in their daily lives)
- Be flexible with the material
- Use male facilitators whenever possible

Denny noted that fathers have been trained to be breadwinners and that a man was thought to be a "good dad" if he was a good provider.

"This is changing with men learning about the nurturing side of parenting, which is foreign to a lot of men."

For more information, contact Elizabeth Denny at (204) 586-8474.

Young Father's Program (Ma Mawi)

Dean McIvor coordinates the father's program at the McGregor site for Ma Mawi. The goal of the program is to build the capacity of fathers to play an active role in their child's life and learn new ways to build a healthy relationship with their partner.

Objectives of the program are to:

- Give participants an opportunity to share their input regarding past and present fatherhood experience
- Help fathers understand that fatherhood is a long-term experience
- Empower fathers to interact positively with their children and partners
- Empower fathers to make healthy parenting choices

Participants in his current group range in age from a 16-year-old to the oldest who is 42. Some are with the mother of their children and others are not.

McIvor plans to rename the program "Positively Fathers" as it is now open to all ages. It takes place once a week for 12 sessions. Program topics include: self-awareness and self esteem, healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, anger management, child development, shaken baby syndrome, labour and delivery, bonding with your baby, identifying baby's needs, and cultural teachings.

Ma Mawi's Adolescent Parent Support Project recently added a male mentor for

the partners of the young women who are residents at Blake Gardens. Marty Belanger will also serve as a positive male role model for the female participants.

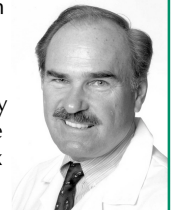
Both Denny and McIvor find that many of the dads in their programs did not have a father or both parents present when they were growing up, which affected their preparation for parenting. It was acknowledged that men are not necessarily geared for parenting the same way that women are while growing up.

For more information, contact Dean McIvor at (204) 925-0331.

Understanding & Helping Adolescents Friday, April 15, 2005

Join internationally renowned speaker Dr. Richard MacKenzie at the 2005 APIN Conference for a dynamic full day workshop for service providers. Known for his original analysis of adolescent developmental issues and problems, and his innovative ways of dealing with adolescent issues, Dr. MacKenzie will expand on the various models, styles and methods available to maximize the impact of your interaction with youth.

Registration brochures will be distributed in early March to everyone on the APIN mailing list (see box below).



**APIN Conference for Adolescent Parents:
A special day will be held in the fall.
Watch for details in upcoming newsletters!**

Promote your programs and events in APIN Network News!

The APIN newsletter is distributed 6x per year to over 550 individuals and organizations in Manitoba. We can help circulate info on programs, events and more!

2005 upcoming deadlines

Apr 13 / Jun 15 / Aug 10

**Fax to (204) 338-4727 or
e-mail: river@mts.net**



GET ON THE APIN MAILING LIST..

Fax the completed form to (204) 338-4727 / post to:
441 Scotia St., Wpg, MB, R2V 1X3 / email: river@mts.net

Name & position: _____

Organization: _____

Mailing address: _____

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E-mail address: _____

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