

**THE HONOURABLE LOUIS SEBERT
MINISTER OF JUSTICE**

**Opening Remarks to Standing Committee on Social Development
A New Day Program**

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you on the A New Day Program. With me today I have Deputy Minister Martin Goldney, Director of Community Justice and Policing Leanne Gardiner, and my Special Advisor Stephen Dunbar. I know that domestic violence is an issue that we all care deeply about, and that as MLAs we are all committed to seeing government take action to address the alarmingly high rates of this kind of violence in our communities.

The A New Day program was designed, piloted, evaluated, and is now being implemented as an on-going program, precisely because we committed to taking action on the crisis of family violence. I want to assure you that the Department of Justice is not just committed to having a program; we are committed to making the program as effective as possible.

We need the best programs we can have because far too many of our families are affected by family violence. The Northwest Territories has the second highest rates in the country and we know that many instances go unreported. It is trite to say that this violence hurts not just the women who experience it but also their families and children. Tragically, we know from direct and all too frequent experience in our territory that the consequences can be deadly, and are always damaging. Women and children are not just hurt physically and it is not just their safety that is at risk. Women in violent relationships suffer not only physically and emotionally, they have less opportunity as a result to reach their potential. Children who witness this behaviour are also harmed significantly. The social costs of domestic violence are substantial. While I cannot quantify them, I can assure you this government understands the costs, and recognizes the importance of taking meaningful action to help prevent the harms caused by violence.

While the A New Day program is just one of the measures this government is taking with respect to family violence, it is an important one. Not only do we need to continue providing help and protection to families experiencing violence, we need to support men who are ready to take responsibility and change their behaviour. This is very much the goal of the A New Day program. Again this is an area where we all, I believe, strongly agree. I want to emphasize that the resources dedicated to this program have not been diminished. There has been no reduction in the budget. There have, however, been changes to how it is administered to better focus resources towards improving participation and results. This, in my view, is not something that should be controversial, but rather should be something we all support.

I have asked officials to provide a presentation on the A New Day program, and I hope that this presentation helps build an appreciation and awareness of just how deep the commitment to deliver the best program is. The presentation will highlight:

- what we learned from our experience and why we have made changes to the program,
- the response the Department of Justice had to the changes from its partners, and how they were considered,
- how a contractor to continue this important program was secured, and the capacity of the contractor to do the work,
- the challenges and opportunities related to working with community partners, and finally
- how the program will be monitored and evaluated moving forward.

I trust that with the information provided you will agree that the Department is not blind to the realities of our challenges in addressing the needs of men who use violence in their intimate relationships. More importantly, I hope that you will agree that the changes made to the program provide necessary improvements and will help ensure the program is delivered and monitored appropriately.

Before I ask Deputy Minister Goldney, and Leanne Gardiner, our Director of Community Justice and Policing, to take us through a brief presentation I do want to emphasize a couple of points. As I mentioned, I do believe that we all care about this issue and want to see a dramatic reduction in family violence. I am encouraged by the attention committee has given this issue and recognize this as strong evidence of our shared objective. While it is absolutely appropriate for this committee to scrutinize any program we have, including A New Day, I do have to acknowledge a concern.

Addressing family violence is an issue that we should be united on. While committee may not always agree with the approach taken, it should be beyond question that my department takes this file seriously and is committed to making the program work as well as it can. Simply leaving the program as it was during the pilot may have served the interests of some, but it is the interests of the men this program is intended for, and their families, that should matter most.

I look forward to hearing any specific suggestions committee may have that could improve this much needed program, or guide our efforts to reduce family violence, and am particularly interested in any improvements that might allow the reach of this program, or something like it, to extend outside of Yellowknife. Providing more support to men throughout the NWT who are ready to take responsibility and address their violent behaviour remains an important objective of the Department.

Thank you Mr. Chair, before we get to our discussion, with your concurrence I would now ask Mr. Goldney to provide a brief presentation.



A New Day: Program for Men Who Use Violence in Intimate Relationships

Government of
Northwest Territories



Outline

- A New Day - changes
- Request for Proposal
- John Howard Society
- Community Partners
- Evaluation





A New Day - Changes

- Flexibility
- Improve connections to community supports
- GNWT to provide administration and clinical supervision
- Facilitators paid on a fee-for-service basis
- Contribution agreement for program intake





Request for Proposal

- Consultation
- Development of RFP
- GNWT Procurement guidelines
- Proponents Meeting
- Decisions following close of RFP Process





John Howard Society

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Capacity
- Contract Terms
- Facilitators
- Contribution Agreement



Community Partners

- Commitment
- Coalition
- Membership
- Focus of Organization



Evaluation

- Previous Evaluation
- Evaluation Framework
- Safety of Victims



Questions?

