RANKIN INLET
SPOUSAL ASSAULT COUNSELLING PILOT PROGRAM
Final Evaluation

March 2007

Evaluation Division
Policy Integration and Coordination Section
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** .................................................................................................................. 1

1. **INTRODUCTION** ......................................................................................................................... 7  
   1.1. Background and Objectives ....................................................................................................... 7  
   1.2. Delivery Approach .................................................................................................................... 8  
   1.3. Program Components .............................................................................................................. 9  
   1.4. Resources ................................................................................................................................ 12  
   1.5. Reach ..................................................................................................................................... 12  
   1.6. Planned Results ....................................................................................................................... 13  
   1.7. Final Outcomes ........................................................................................................................ 14  
   1.8. Governance Structure ............................................................................................................. 14  

2. **THE EVALUATION** ..................................................................................................................... 17  
   2.1. Reporting and Evaluation Requirements .................................................................................. 17  
   2.2. Purpose and Time Frame of the Final Evaluation ..................................................................... 18  
   2.3. Interviews ................................................................................................................................ 19  
   2.4. Limitations of the Interviews ................................................................................................... 19  
   2.5. Scope of Interviews ................................................................................................................ 19  
   2.6. Intake File Review: Offenders and Victims .............................................................................. 20  
   2.7. RCMP Recidivism Statistics ...................................................................................................... 20  
   2.8. Document Review .................................................................................................................... 20  
   2.9. Logic Model ............................................................................................................................ 21  

3. **EVALUATION FINDINGS** ........................................................................................................... 23  
   3.1. Intake File Review .................................................................................................................... 23  
   3.2. Offenders Referred to SACP and Completion Statistics ....................................................... 23  
   3.3. Profile of Offenders .................................................................................................................. 24  
   3.4. Results of Interviews with Offenders ...................................................................................... 24  
   3.5. Results of Interviews with Victims ........................................................................................... 25  
   3.6. Results of Interviews with Counsellors .................................................................................. 25  
   3.7. Results of Interviews with Steering Committee Members ..................................................... 27


3.8. Results of Interviews with the Elders ............................................................. 29
3.9. Results of interview with Outreach Program Worker and Document Review .... 29
3.10. Recidivism Statistics from RCMP records .................................................... 31
3.11. Document Review ....................................................................................... 32
3.12. Changes to the Program: ............................................................................ 32
3.13. Special Issues in Northern Communities ...................................................... 33
3.14. Positive Outcomes from the Program .......................................................... 33
3.15. Positive Effects of the Program on Children ............................................... 34
3.16. Summary of Direct Outcomes and Ultimate Impacts ................................. 34

4. OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS .......................... 37
   1.1. Implementation and Administration ........................................................... 37
   1.2. Effectiveness .............................................................................................. 37
   1.3. Continuing Need ....................................................................................... 38
   1.4. Transferability .......................................................................................... 39
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

Spousal assault is a serious problem in Rankin Inlet, a remote northern community with a predominantly Inuit population of about 2,100. RCMP statistics indicate that about one in six (16%) court cases in Rankin Inlet involve spousal assault.

The Rankin Inlet Spousal Assault Counselling Program (SACP) is the only spousal abuse counselling program available in Nunavut. It brings together the resources of several organizations to develop practical solutions to spousal abuse.

The program involves two counsellors, a coordinator/counsellor and an assistant counsellor. The program, managed by the coordinator counsellor, is accountable to the community and administered through Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre. Funding for the pilot project ($917,060 over three years) was provided by Nunavut Justice, Justice Canada, Public Security and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC). In-kind support was provided by Kivalliq Centre and Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre in Rankin Inlet.

SACP is a project that offers offenders the opportunity to seek help, end the abusive behaviour and thus avoid imprisonment. The program includes 96 hours of counselling for offenders charged with spousal assault who are referred to the program by the court. Offenders receive 18 hours of individual counselling and 72 hours of group counselling (36 two-hour sessions). Victims' counselling, offered on a voluntary basis, provides individual support and group counselling to victims concurrently with the offenders' program.

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1 This is known as a pre-sentencing project, since the offender is charged with a criminal offence, accepts responsibility by pleading guilty, and then is referred to the counselling program instead of being sentenced immediately. If the offender successfully completes the SACP, the Crown and defence will recommend to the judge that he or she receive a conditional discharge as the sentence.
In the first three years of SACP, the short-term goals were to:

- refer eligible offenders to the counselling program;
- ensure offenders attend and complete the counselling sessions;
- treat offenders within their community;
- counsel victims while meeting their needs for safety;
- reduce the likelihood of spousal abuse following the completion of the program;
- raise awareness of family violence issues in the Rankin Inlet community; and
- provide treatment to offenders outside their work schedules so that they are not taken away from their jobs.

The program's ultimate impacts are to:

- reduce spousal abuse; and
- change the underlying relationship dynamics that have led to spousal abuse in the past.

As with any pilot program, particularly one operating in a remote northern community, the program has met with some challenges and constraints. Nevertheless, the program is successfully established, is operating as envisioned, and was evaluated on time. The results are considered reliable to the extent possible with a small number of clients and within the short timeframe.

2. Brief History of the Program

The SACP was developed by several members of the Steering Committee at the Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre in April 2002. In July 2002, the Circuit Court referred the first potential clients, three of whom were accepted into the program in September. The program began with individual counselling, and group counselling was later added.

Through the formation of an Elders Committee, Inuit Elders began working with the program to ensure that the Inuit culture was maintained in the program, and to provide counselling to the offenders and victims.

2 See Page 14 for description of the Steering Committee.
The court did not refer many clients in the first year, perhaps because of the fairly strict eligibility criteria, or perhaps because the RCMP and defence lawyers either did not know about or did not trust the program. Program administrators addressed this by meeting with the RCMP, the Crown prosecutor’s office and defence lawyers to discuss the program’s intake criteria and to encourage more referrals to the SACP.

By December 2002 three offenders and two victims had completed the counselling sessions. However, when both counsellors subsequently left the program, it was stalled until a new counsellor began in October 2003. By that time, 13 offenders had been referred to the program.

By March 2005, 33 offenders had been referred and 10 victims had participated in the victims’ counselling program.

3. Evaluation Strategy

The evaluation examined the issues of design and implementation, relevance, success, cost effectiveness/alternatives and transferability. The evaluation consisted of personal interviews, a review of victim and offender case files, reviews of quarterly and annual program reports, and finally a criminal record check to determine if any participants re-offended after completing the program.

In total, 33 in-person interviews were conducted with the two SACP counsellors, one former outreach worker, three Elders (with the assistance of a translator), 10 offenders, seven victims, seven members of the Steering Committee; one representative from Public Safety and Emergency preparedness; one representative from the Department of Justice, and the Crown prosecution lawyer in Nunavut.

4. Key Findings

Despite some preliminary difficulties and setbacks, the program is functioning as planned, and the direct outcomes are being met:

- eligible offenders are being referred to the counselling program;
- offenders are attending and completing the counselling sessions;
• offenders are not being removed from their community for treatment, as they would be during incarceration;

• victims are attending counselling while having their need for safety met;

• none of the offenders who have successfully completed all sessions have been subsequently charged with spousal assault;

• progress is being made toward raising awareness of family violence issues in the Rankin Inlet community; and

• offenders are not missing work to attend the counselling program.

5. Other Positive Outcomes from the Program

Victims reported feeling safe with the offenders now. The counselling taught them about different types of abuse, and they received tips on how to defuse or prevent tense situations that could lead to violence. They also reported being happier at home.

The victims who attended counselling reported gaining self-esteem. Seven of the eight women in the victim counselling session had become employed or joined a skills development course since joining the program. Some offenders and victims have referred others to the program. Although these other clients did not qualify for the court-appointed program, they were referred to the outreach program.

The outreach component has become much larger than anticipated, and is now receiving financial support from the Aboriginal Healing Program. This larger outreach program is expected to benefit the broader community as it will involve other helping agencies and the schools in Rankin Inlet.

As a result of the SACP outreach activities over the past three years, spousal abuse is now being talked about more in Rankin Inlet; people are coming forward to get help and support to end family violence, even outside the court referral process. The additional four counsellors with the expanded outreach program now serve clientele who do not meet the SACP criteria.
6. Positive Effects on Children

The 21 offenders who attended the program had in their families a total of 52 children. One of the most gratifying outcomes of the program is that parents, both offenders and victims, are reporting that their children are happier at home, are less nervous and fearful, are performing better in school, and are showing awareness of more appropriate ways to deal with conflict in the home.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The program is now on track and should continue to see positive results. The counsellors will continue to follow up with offenders and victims for up to six months after they graduate from the program.

The long-term outcomes are being achieved in Rankin Inlet although it is too soon to determine conclusively if the program significantly reduces spousal abuse for any lasting time frame. More time will be required to determine if the program changes the dynamics leading to spousal abuse.

The program would probably benefit other Inuit northern communities, but it is strongly recommended that each community develop the program to meet its own particular needs, and that the program be developed in consultation with the community’s social and health agencies and educational representatives. The support and ongoing participation of various legal and community organizations is imperative to the continuing success of the SACP. It was also suggested that any community interested in developing a similar program contact the Rankin Inlet SACP counsellors and Steering Committee members about the lessons learned.

The counsellors, with the help of a consultant, reviewed the manuals for both the offenders’ and victims’ counselling programs in March 2005. Changes to the pilot program will be reflected in the revised manuals.

It is recommended that the counsellors complete monthly data collection sheets and include them in the quarterly and annual reports, and that exit interviews be conducted with the offenders and victims who complete the counselling programs. Further, it is suggested that counsellors follow up with program graduates for up to three years to determine recidivism rates over a longer period.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Objectives

Rankin Inlet is an arctic community with a population of approximately 2,100 people located on the western shores of Hudson Bay, in the Keewatin region of Nunavut. Approximately 80 percent of the population is Inuit. Statistics have consistently shown that Rankin Inlet has the highest rate of spousal abuse in Northern Canada. The RCMP in Rankin Inlet have estimated that they spend between 15 and 25 percent of their time dealing with spousal assaults. Although this is already a high percentage, the RCMP also recognizes that the incidence of spousal abuse is actually higher because many incidents remain unreported.

The Spousal Abuse Counselling Program (SACP) for Rankin Inlet is a pilot project developed by the community, involving counselling for abusers and for victims, and an educational outreach program for the community. The program, based on Inuit values, brings several agencies and organizations together to develop solutions to spousal abuse.

The program is designed to provide alternatives to incarceration for people who have begun to develop an abusive lifestyle and wish to change. The Inuit perspective is that individuals first need to recognize that they are offenders who must be accountable for their actions before they work on the problems that caused the negative behaviour.

This program, the first of its kind delivered in an Inuit community, focuses on healing the individual offender. The program helps offenders learn coping skills to deal with issues that trigger family violence, and learn alternative behaviours. The offender is not incarcerated during the counselling, and most couples remain together during the program. Victim safety is

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3 According to the 1996 Census, there were 2,058 people in Rankin Inlet. According to the 2001 Census, there were 2,177, an increase of 5.8 percent. Nunavut has a population of 26,745; Rankin Inlet represents less than ten percent of the population of the territory. In 2001 the median age in Rankin Inlet was 23.3, similar to Nunavut's 22.1. (http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/CP01/Details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=6205017 &Geo2=PR&Code2=62&Data=Count&SearchText=Rankin%20Inlet&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1 =All&Custom)

paramount; victims are given a safety plan and counselled, if they wish, while their partners attend the offender program.

This holistic approach seeks to reintegrate offenders as contributing members of their families and their community. The Elders want to continue this approach in dealing with crime in Rankin Inlet.

1.2. Delivery Approach

The program’s goal is to reduce spousal abuse through a culturally appropriate counselling program designed to help abusers change the way they relate to others, particularly their spouses.

A coordinator/counsellor counsels the offenders and an assistant counsellor counsels the victims. The program is managed by a coordinator/counsellor who develops and implements the program and generates project reports. The program is administered through Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre, a non-profit society registered under the Nunavut Societies Act, which also handles all financial matters, including accounting, quality assurance and reporting.

SACP has four elements:

- an offenders’ program;
- a victims’ program;
- an outreach program; and
- an aftercare and follow-up program.

Each of these is described below.
1.3. **Program Components**

1.3.1. **Offenders’ Program**

After an offender enters a guilty plea in Court, the Court decides whether the offender will be referred to the counselling program.

An offender is considered for this program only after the counsellor conducts two interviews:

- During an “intake interview” with the offender, the counsellor determines whether the offender meets the acceptance criteria.
- During an interview with the victim, the counsellor determines if the home environment has improved since the arrest and gathers information that will help determine whether to accept the offender into the program.

The counsellor is present at all court appearances, and may be asked for an opinion about the offender’s eligibility. The judge, however, decides whether to refer the offender into the counselling program.

Once accepted into the program, the offender signs a contract stipulating that he or she will attend all counselling sessions. The length of the counselling period depends on the timing of court dates, whether there is a group operating or starting in the near future, as well as the needs of the family. New sessions often begin in September/October, but can begin only when there are enough referrals. While awaiting admission to group counselling the offenders meet with a counsellor to complete the intake form and begin individual counselling.⁵

SACP involves 90 hours of counselling: 18 hours of individual counselling and 36 two-hour group counselling sessions. Typically, there are seven to 10 offenders in a group. Elders and community specialists are often invited to participate in these group sessions to share information about positive family life and resolving differences without violence.

Once accepted into the program, the offender must meet the program’s specific requirements:

- Mandatory attendance. After the first absence, the counsellor phones or visits to determine the reason for the absence. After the second absence, the RCMP or probation officer visits,

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⁵ RCMP would refer offenders to the program according to a pre determined intake protocol. In take forms were used to confirm his eligibility into the program and guide the counsellor in the intervention.
and after the third absence the offender is referred back to the courts for the judge to decide whether the offender can remain in the program.

- Zero tolerance for intoxication. If the offender attends a counselling session while intoxicated, he or she will be asked to leave and an absence will be recorded.

- Original assessment. Throughout the program, the counsellor assesses whether the counselling is benefiting the offender. In consultation with the Casework Committee (described in the section on Governance Structure), the counsellor will decide if the offender is permitted to remain in the program.

- Obligation to report domestic abuse. If domestic violence occurs during the counselling period, the offender will return to the court system, and the counsellors must report any evidence of further abuse.

At the end of the program, the counsellor makes a final assessment of the offender, and completes a pre-sentencing report that recommends the next steps to the court.

Once the offender completes the counselling program, a sentencing hearing is scheduled, and the Crown prosecutor and defence counsel make a joint recommendation to the judge that the offender receive a conditional discharge.

1.3.2. Victims’ Program

Equally important is a voluntary counselling program for victims, which provides ongoing individual support and group counselling. This program starts at emergency services and continues parallel to the offenders’ program. Even if the couple are not together after the assault, the victim can attend counselling and receive help.

To begin this program, the victim completes an impact form to describe the details behind the incident leading to the offender’s arrest. Since the victim’s safety is the main focus, the counsellor does not phone the victim until the crisis situation has passed. During this phone call the counsellor attempts to arrange a meeting with the victim. At the meeting, if the victim wishes to receive counselling, a contract is signed explaining the counselling and the expected time commitments for the sessions.
The victim’s program is based on two philosophies:6

- Develop safety plans and skills that will allow the victim to remain safe and heal from the violence.
- Through counselling, work on additional skills for coping with the controlling behaviour, and provide alternatives to the intense emotional reliance on the partner.

Similar to the offender’s program, the victim’s program includes both individual and group sessions. It begins with one-hour individual sessions that concentrate on identifying the critical problems and circumstances that led to the spouse being charged.

After completing four or five individual sessions, the victim makes the transition to group sessions, if the victim is ready. The two-hour group sessions take place twice a week for five months.

Given the voluntary nature of this program, there is no defined progression for the sessions and victims determine when the counselling program is complete.

1.3.3. Outreach Program

The outreach component is designed to develop awareness of family violence issues and to educate the community about the dangers of domestic violence and its effects on families. Families and schools are targeted through programs delivered to schools, women’s groups and special interest groups.

1.3.4. Aftercare and Follow-Up

Once the victim or offender completes the counselling program, an exit interview determines whether any improvements have occurred in the home and evaluates the effectiveness of the individual and group counselling sessions.

The final aspect of the program is aftercare and follow-up offered to offenders and victims to prevent offender relapse. A high priority is placed on showing support, guidance and appreciation for the offender’s progress.7

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1.4. **Resources**

The pilot project was funded by:

- Nunavut Justice ($25,000 annually)
- Justice Canada (the Aboriginal Justice Strategy ($25,000), the Family Violence Initiative ($20,000), the Victims of Crime Centre ($15,000), and the Justice Innovations and Partnership Fund ($31,502)
- Public Security and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC). ($288,000 over four fiscal years).

In-kind support was provided by KivalliQ Centre and Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre in Rankin Inlet.

Table 1 shows the allocation of resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type</th>
<th>2002 Development Phase</th>
<th>2003*</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005 (6 months)</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>$254,361</td>
<td>$249,982</td>
<td>$231,841</td>
<td>$134,950</td>
<td>$871,134</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-kind support**</td>
<td>$30,926</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$45,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$285,287</td>
<td>$255,982</td>
<td>$237,841</td>
<td>$137,950</td>
<td>$917,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Implementation phase began in September 2003

** Office space, office equipment and supplies, etc., provided by Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre

1.5. **Reach**

SACP serves both male and female offenders in Rankin Inlet who have been charged with spousal assault, but who are not habitual offenders. The program also targets victims of assault and the entire Rankin Inlet community.

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Several key stakeholders and partners provide assistance to SACP, including:

- Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre;
- Keewatin Legal Services Centre Society;
- Crown Prosecutor’s Office for Nunavut;
- Nunavut Justice;
- Department of Justice Canada;
- Public Security and Emergency Preparedness Canada;
- Pauktuuttit Inuit Women’s Association;
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP);
- Rankin Inlet Justice of the Peace Court;
- Nunavut Health & Social Services;
- Aqsaaraq Addiction Projects;
- Kataujaq Safe Shelter;
- Kivalliq Outreach Program;
- local clergy;
- Inuit Elders.

Partnerships have also been established with early childhood education programs, victims’ support programs and adult education programs at Nunavut Arctic College.

1.6. Planned Results

SACP intended to achieve the following short-term results:

- refer eligible offenders to the counselling program;
- ensure offenders attend and complete the counselling sessions;
- treat offenders within their community, rather than removing them for incarceration;
- counsel victims while meeting their need for safety;
• reduce the likelihood of spousal abuse following the completion of the program;
• raise awareness of family violence issues in the Rankin Inlet community; and
• provide treatment to offenders outside their work schedules so that they are not taken away from their jobs.

1.7. Final Outcomes

SAPC expected to achieve two long-term outcomes:

• reduce spousal abuse; and
• change underlying relationship dynamics that have led to spousal abuse.

1.8. Governance Structure

The SACP is accountable to the community through the following mechanisms.

1.8.1. Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre

The Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre, a non-profit society, is the sponsoring organization, responsible for:

• administering the program;
• contracting with the funding agency to receive and disburse funds; and
• all financial matters (including accounting, quality assurance and reporting).

In addition, Pulaarvik is a non-voting member of the Steering Committee.

1.8.2. Steering Committee

The steering committee guides the development and delivery of the program and ensures that it meets the needs of the community, and of victims and their families. The committee ensures the program reflects traditional Inuit knowledge as well as “best practices” for dealing with abusers. The committee also develops measures to support the counsellors with any aspect of delivery;
and evaluates the value of the program for victims and the community. This committee consists of representatives from funding partners, community groups, Nunavut social services justice organizations, the federal justice and corrections systems, and Inuit organizations. The steering committee meets quarterly, twice a year in person and twice by teleconference.

1.8.3. Casework/Advisory Committee

The Casework/Advisory Committee consists of members of the community – counsellors, social workers or members of the RCMP. This committee meets at least twice a month. Its key roles are to:

- support the program counsellors working with victims, families and abusers through ideas, values and beliefs;
- provide a forum for discussing counselling approaches and techniques for specific clients;
- coordinate various services that working with families in crisis.

1.8.4. The Elders’ Committee

The role of the Elders is to ensure that the program maintains a culturally appropriate approach and reflects Inuit values. The Elders’ approach is to address the underlying issues that led to the offender’s violent behaviour. The Elders Committee meets monthly.

1.8.5. Oversight of the Committees

The coordinator/counsellor coordinates all committees and attends all meetings to facilitate communication between committees.
2. THE EVALUATION

2.1. Reporting and Evaluation Requirements

According to the funding agreement, the Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre was to provide annual financial reports, and the senior counsellor was to submit quarterly reports. The agreement also stipulated that the pilot program was to be evaluated after three years to determine the program’s effectiveness for the offenders and victims, to determine whether it could be transferred to other areas in Nunavut, and whether it prevents the recurrence of family violence. The program manual was reviewed in March 2005, and will be revised in the next phase of the program.

An interdepartmental working group was established to provide federal oversight. Working group members include representatives from PSEPC (Aboriginal Corrections Division); and representatives from Justice, including the Crown Prosecutor from Iqaluit Regional Office; the legal policy counsel from the Family Children and Youth Section; and the Policy Centre for Victim’s Issues; the Evaluation Division; Research and Statistics Division; and the Programs Branch.

An evaluation framework was developed in March 2003. The Logic Model (presented below) indicates the program’s main activities; the expected outcomes; the program’s objective; how this objective will be met; the users, clients and beneficiaries; and the expected direct and ultimate outcomes. The Logic Model was used to develop the evaluation strategy.

In November 2003, Justice Program and Evaluation personnel visited the site to determine the availability of data and the progress on implementation of the Program and data collection; and to determine whether the steering, advisory and Elders committees and the Outreach component were operating as planned.
2.2. **Purpose and Time Frame of the Final Evaluation**

The final evaluation examined the three years of the pilot program, from October 2002 to March 2005. It examined several aspects of the program, including design and implementation, relevance, success, cost effectiveness/alternatives and transferability. The final evaluation seeks to determine whether the program:

- is effective for offenders and victims;
- prevented recurrences of family violence;
- successfully met the needs of the Inuit community;
- ensured the safety of the victims;
- could be a suitable model for addressing family violence in Inuit communities;
- should continue in Rankin Inlet; and
- could be transferred to other remote northern Inuit communities.

The Evaluation Strategy is presented in the Evaluation Framework produced by the Evaluation Division in March 2003. It lists the indicators used to assess the program’s effectiveness.

The final evaluation strategy called for in-person interviews with various stakeholders and clients. In November 2004, the Steering Committee reviewed the proposed evaluation methodology and data collection instruments to ensure that the interview questions proposed for the offenders and victims were appropriate.

The evaluator conducted two on-site visits during the final evaluation. In November 2004, the evaluator reviewed the files and interviewed offenders, victims and the Crown prosecutor. In March 2005, the evaluator interviewed counsellors, and the members of the steering committee, Elders’ committee and the casework/Advisory Committee, and arranged for recidivism statistics from the Rankin Inlet RCMP for all offenders in the program.

All client files were reviewed and aggregate statistics were calculated to provide a profile of the clients and statistics on the attendance and completion rates.
2.3. **Interviews**

In total, 33 interviews were conducted with:

- 2 SACP counsellors
- 1 former outreach worker
- 3 Elders (with the assistance of a translator)
- 10 offenders
- 7 victims
- 7 members of the Steering Committee\(^8\); (in addition to the two counsellors who also sit on the Steering Committee)
- 1 representative from Department of Justice
- 1 representative from Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
- 1 Crown prosecutor from Nunavut

2.4. **Limitations of the Interviews**

The two counsellors from the first year of the program (October 2002 to March 2003) were not interviewed. Interviews were conducted with one of three offenders from the first session, and with nine of 21 offenders in the second and third sessions. No interviews were conducted with offenders who were not accepted into the program, nor with offenders who dropped out or were let go for failing to attend meetings. The prosecution was interviewed, but the defence counsel was not.

2.5. **Scope of Interviews**

The interviews were intended to examine the program’s design and implementation, relevance, success, cost effectiveness/alternatives and transferability.

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\(^8\) As the four members of the Casework/Advisory Committee are also on the Steering Committee, no special interviews were required for the Casework/Advisory Committee.
2.6. **Intake File Review: Offenders and Victims**

The evaluation included a review of intake forms, which cover criminal history, age, family situation, employment and education history. Counsellors complete the forms during one-hour interviews with the offender, and may require several sessions to complete them.

2.7. **RCMP Recidivism Statistics**

The RCMP in Rankin Inlet conducted a CPIC criminal record check on every offender referred to the program to determine if they had committed any other offence since the date of referral.

2.8. **Document Review**

Quarterly and annual reports were reviewed to obtain information on program implementation, training, outreach activities, number of group and individual counselling sessions held, court referrals, meetings with agencies and individuals, changes to the program, and any difficulties that affected the progress of the program.
### 2.9. Logic Model

**Objective:** To support a justice system that is more responsive, fair and effective in meeting the needs and aspirations of Inuit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW?</th>
<th>WHO? WHERE?</th>
<th>WHAT do we want?</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td>Beneficiary / User / Clients</td>
<td>Direct Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop partnerships with justice personnel and existing community services</td>
<td>Referral protocols</td>
<td>Program operators / counsellors</td>
<td>Eligible offenders are referred to the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and maintain tools / policies for counselling offenders and victims</td>
<td>Meetings with community services</td>
<td>Offenders, victims and families in the community</td>
<td>Offenders attend counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop network of volunteers</td>
<td>Tools for counselling (e.g., manuals, forms)</td>
<td>Justice system personnel</td>
<td>Offenders complete counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize Committees (Steering, Elders, Casework)</td>
<td>Policies</td>
<td>Community services</td>
<td>Offenders are treated in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess training needs for staff and volunteers</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>The Rankin Inlet community</td>
<td>Victims attend counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide training opportunities for staff and volunteers</td>
<td>Committee meetings</td>
<td>Sponsoring government departments</td>
<td>Victims’ needs are met (counselling, safety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold individual and group counselling sessions for offenders and victims</td>
<td>Trained counsellors</td>
<td>Other Inuit communities</td>
<td>For participating offenders, spousal abuse is less likely after participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop follow-up activities for offenders and victims</td>
<td>Training opportunities for volunteers</td>
<td>Individual / group counselling sessions</td>
<td>Awareness of family violence issues in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold community outreach / communication activities</td>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Offenders don’t have to miss work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1. Intake File Review

A total of 31 offenders were referred to the program between October 2002 and October 2004. Of these, 21 offenders had completed the program by March 31, 2005. The 10 others either did not meet the criteria or had started the program, but were subsequently removed for failing to attend three sessions. The offenders attended in three groups: Group 1, Group A and Group B.  

3.2. Offenders Referred to SACP and Completion Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFENDERS REFERRED TO THE SACP – RANKIN INLET FINDINGS AS OF MARCH 31, 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clients Referred and Outcome between October 2002 and March 31, 2005</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible and referred to the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31&lt;sup&gt;10&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients assessed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted into the Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients who quit (4) + declined to attend (3) = 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed (graduates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 = 3; Group A = 7 March 2003 – May 2004 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program graduates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>10</sup> There were 33 referrals, but information is not available on two offenders who were referred to the first session, but never showed up for the program.
The beginning of a new group is dictated by the reality of the northern lifestyle, in which many Inuit leave the village for the summer months and return in the fall when children return to school. The counsellors generally run the sessions from October to May.

3.3. Profile of Offenders

The 31 offenders ranged in age from 20 to 46; half were 20 to 29, and the rest were 30 to 46 years old. The length of their relationships with their partners ranged from one to 18 years, with the majority having relationships of six to 10 years when they entered the counselling program. Most offenders had between one and four children; one did not have children (information was not available on five offenders). The 28 offenders who attended counselling had 61 children in total; the 21 who completed the counselling sessions had 52 children in total.

3.4. Results of Interviews with Offenders

A total of 10 offenders (two women and eight men) were interviewed, one from the first counselling session, two from the second, and seven from the third. Offenders were asked whether the counselling had helped them to reduce spousal abuse. (Particular note was made of any substance abuse, anger, or crime.) They were asked what parts of the program they found most useful and least useful, and what changes they would make. They were asked whether the program carried over into other areas of their lives (e.g., work, social contacts, contact with justice system); whether they received assistance besides the counselling program (e.g., alcohol and drug abuse, anger management, employment counselling); and whether they would feel comfortable visiting the counsellors for advice after completing the program.

Offender responses were generally positive, and many said they enjoyed attending the group sessions. They learned techniques to cope with feelings, such as taking time out, going for walks, playing with the children, or talking about a problem, instead of reacting with violence. They also learned to identify different types of abuse. Communication had been a problem for many, but most mentioned how the counselling had improved communication with their partners, families, friends and colleagues. In addition, many offenders said they felt they could talk to group members even outside the counselling sessions.

Generally, offenders said they would recommend this program to others in the same situation. Some offenders and victims suggested adding couples counselling to the program.
There were several unexpected outcomes from the program: men spent more time with their children, helped out more around the house and gave up alcohol (and gave up old drinking buddies). Another positive for the families and the community was that many participants followed up on employment opportunities or joined training programs.

3.5. Results of Interviews with Victims

Seven victims attending group counselling as of November 2004 were interviewed.\textsuperscript{11} These victims ranged in age from 20 to 40 years old, and their relationships with their offender partners ranged in length from 3.5 years to 20 years.

Victims were asked whether their needs for safety and counselling were being met, how the program had helped them, and what changes they would suggest for the program. They reported feeling safe, and said they had been given tips on how to defuse or prevent tense situations that could lead to abuse. They reported enjoying the group sessions where they could openly discuss their feelings with other supportive women. Several said they would feel comfortable calling another woman from the group to talk, or seeing the counsellor after completing the program. Some expressed a desire to help other women. In fact, after completing the program some victims returned to support clients in subsequent counselling sessions. Victims became a continuing source of support to each other.

There was some question about whether female victims of spousal violence would be comfortable in a program with a male counsellor. However, this was never an issue with the victims who were interviewed.

3.6. Results of Interviews with Counsellors

The two counsellors on staff at the time of the interviews (November 2004 and March 2005) were interviewed for the evaluation. They were asked about the program’s governance structure, barriers to implementation, their suggestions for modifications, whether they believed the program had achieved its objectives, and whether it positively affected the participants and the community. Other questions centred on the offenders’ compliance with terms of the program and the appropriateness of the intake criteria, whether there was a continuing need for the program, and if the SACP could be transferred to other Nunavut communities.

\textsuperscript{11} Two victims were receiving individual counselling, and had not joined group counselling sessions.
At the beginning, the program had difficulty keeping offenders. From the five court referrals between September 2002 and January 2003, only three stayed in the program. This attrition rate may be due to the fact that the first two program counsellors were not residents of Rankin Inlet prior to the Program starting up, they were trained counsellors from Baker Lake. According to the new set of counsellors and community members, they may have experienced more difficulty gaining the trust of the community, which may account for some of the reluctance of offenders and victims to join and continue with counselling sessions. Both counsellors interviewed in the evaluation were well-known long-term members of the community and, although neither was trained in spousal abuse counselling, they had general experience dealing with spousal abuse. Both received specific training relevant to their roles as counsellors of the SACP in Rankin Inlet. In remote northern communities the expertise required to run programs of this nature will not always be readily available, and so decisions will have to be made either to train members of the community or to bring in counsellors from outside the community. Both approaches have positive and negative aspects. The various training undertaken by the two SACP counsellors is detailed below in the Document Review section of evaluation findings.

Counsellors commented that they walk a fine line between caring for the safety of clients and interfering with their clients through follow-up phone calls. They are also concerned about when they need to keep confidences and when they need to call the police because of some information that has been revealed to them.

According to counsellors in the first session, it was difficult to get female victims to seek counselling. Some victims' counselling was done over the phone, and the first in-person meetings were done at home with the victims over tea, which is expected in Inuit communities. With particularly reluctant victims more than one home visit was sometimes necessary before the victim was comfortable in joining the group.

The counsellors are working with the RCMP to encourage referrals to the program. They have met with Nunavut government officials and have the trust of the deputy minister of justice, and have secured Nunavut government funding for another year for the program. With the expansion of counselling and follow-up duties, it was necessary to hire office assistance for the administrative and general office duties. Although funding for this position was secured only for three months, the counsellors found the position so helpful that they felt a full-time administrative position was needed to help keep the program on track and give them more time to concentrate on clients.
Counsellors and others identified several underlying issues that may contribute to or exacerbate family violence: alcoholic parents, lack of community resources to address problems or lack of awareness of those resources, gambling, overcrowding due to the shortage of public housing, fetal alcohol syndrome and past sexual abuse.

The SACP partnerships have been strengthened with social services, alcohol and drug counsellors, victim services and the RCMP. The counsellors said they would like to work more closely with the RCMP in deciding on appropriate referrals to the program. They suggested that the RCMP could help by providing more information about offenders at the beginning. They also would like to do more with the inter-agency people, and work more closely with the community justice committee.

3.7. Results of Interviews with Steering Committee Members

Of the 14 active steering committee members, seven members were interviewed, representing federal, territorial and community interests.

Steering Committee members were asked whether the program was operating as planned, what changes might be needed, whether they believed there was a continuing need for the program and if the program was a better alternative than using the formal criminal justice system (e.g., probation, fines or incarceration) to respond to family violence. Committee members were also asked about the partnerships that had been formed.

Although an RCMP officer had been actively involved with the Steering Committee at the beginning of the project and had helped develop the program, when this officer was transferred out of Rankin Inlet in August 2002, RCMP involvement dropped off until March 2003 when the detachment gained a new officer who took an interest in the SACP.

Interviewees (including seven steering committee members and one RCMP officer) were asked to rate various aspects of the program on a scale from 1 to 5, with “1” being “not at all” and “5” being “completely.” The responses to these questions are detailed in Table 3.
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the design of the pilot program appropriate given its objectives?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent was the program implemented as planned?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was this program the most appropriate way to support a justice system that</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is more responsive, fair and effective in meeting the needs and aspirations of Inuit?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does this program, in its current structure, meet your expectation and needs?12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the activities of the program meeting the needs of offenders, victims and other stakeholders?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the intake criteria appropriate?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As these results indicate, most respondents believe the program is well designed, was implemented as planned, is appropriate to the needs of the clients, and has appropriate intake criteria. Most believed the program should be restricted to first-time offenders. One person commented that perhaps the program could be made available to anyone who wants to attend.

Four respondents mentioned that the change in staff after one year had been a problem. Another said a back-up plan is needed to help counsellors deal with serious consequences when offenders stop attending and re-offend.

All eight respondents indicated that the program is needed and should continue. In fact, support for the program is so great that all committee members were planning on continuing with the steering committee. They believe the program could benefit other communities in Nunavut, although they note that this program alone cannot address the needs of the participants. Other agencies and the Elders must participate to ensure the long-term success of the program. One comment sums up the general responses from the Steering Committee:

12 One respondent did not give a value.
“One abuser will impact the lives of many people: spouse, children, grandparents, extended family members, friends, co-workers, church members, etc. Being in a small community, the impact of abuse is widely felt. If the program can help an abuser to change his/her way, then many people close to the abuser will feel the positive impact. People are learning to communicate in a healthy fashion.”

One member had this to say about cost effectiveness: “Detention centres are costly, the individual is removed from his family and community, the family will miss the income and the father or mother. Although no statistics are available at this point, to have an individual in jail costs approximately $850 to the government per day. It does not include the loss of income for that individual and more than probably the cost of social services for that family without that income. To have an individual stay in his community would probably cost less than $100 per day for the delivery of the spousal abuse intervention program.”

3.8. Results of Interviews with the Elders

One effect of the Elders’ involvement with SACP was to increase their availability to the offenders within the counselling sessions as well as afterward. Elders will now be a resource for offenders and victims for issues other than family violence.

At the beginning, there was some confusion among the Elders about their role. Some victims and offenders felt the Elders did not reinforce the program’s position that there should be no violence between couples. The counsellor who joined the program in November 2003 met with the Elders to address this concern and clarify the course content. The Elders who participate in the program are clear on the values of the program. Elders seek to resolve some of the confusion over identity, instil pride in traditional ways, raise self-esteem and help clients to regain self-respect. Abstinence from alcohol is part of accepting the more traditional role of self-resourceful Inuit people. After offenders complete the program, Elders will counsel offenders or couples. In this way, the Elders Committee has become involved, not only in the counselling but also in the aftercare of clients.

3.9. Results of interview with Outreach Program Worker and Document Review

The outreach program was targeted at schools, women’s groups, special interest groups, families and the community.
News media helped communicate to all seven communities in the Kivalliq region (Rankin Inlet, Aviat, Baker lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Repulse Bay, and Whale cove). The local newspaper ran several articles about spousal abuse and the local radio station included a couple of programs. In November 2002, CBC Radio interviewed the outreach worker, and in February 2003 did an afternoon show on SACP for two consecutive days, one in Inuktitut and one in English.

The outreach program developed several partnerships with local community organizations, including with Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre, RCMP, Nunavut Health and Social Services, Aqsaraaq Addiction Projects, Kataujaq Safe Shelter, local clergy, Inuit Elders, the birthing centre, all three schools and the district education authority, the Hamlet of Rankin Inlet, youth drop-in centre, and the probation department of the Nunavut government.

Ongoing partnerships were developed by holding workshops and through on-going communication within the community. The Outreach Program helps connect with individuals who don’t go through the court system but are nevertheless affected by family violence. It remains an important component of the SACP.

An open house in March 2003 drew Elders, representatives from the justice community, Pauktuutit Inuit Women’s Association and Nunavut Justice, resulting in media coverage of the SACP by CBC North radio, regional newspapers and papers from Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

At an open house held in September 2004 at the Friendship Centre, information packages were distributed and family photos provided to raise awareness. Thirty visitors met with the program personnel.

The SACP counsellor participated in a federal territorial consultation on family violence in Rankin Inlet in September 2004. The assistant counsellor gave a presentation on suicide prevention at a workshop for teachers in Rankin Inlet.

The coordinator/counsellor explained the program to the territorial Minister of Health and Social Services when she attended an Iqaluit dinner meeting in December 2004, to discuss suicide prevention and domestic violence. The coordinator/counsellor also gave a presentation to about 20 other dinner attendees from RCMP, Justice Canada, and Nunavut Justice.

The program again received media coverage in January 2005 when the two counsellors were interviewed for the Nunatsiaq newspaper. In March 2005, the counsellors were invited to present
their program to the annual meeting of the Qulliit Nunavut Status of Women in Rankin Inlet. SACP counsellors also met with Family Mediation Services of Nunavut Justice and counsellors from Cape Dorset.

3.10. Recidivism Statistics from RCMP records

Of the 28 offenders who attended at least part of the program\(^\text{13}\), two were subsequently charged with new offences.

One of the offenders who completed the first session later committed assault, not against his spouse but against another male. The charge was stayed, he was referred back to the program in April 2003 and attended all sessions successfully completing in May 2004. As of March 31, 2005 he has not re-offended.

Another offender, who had been referred in October 2003 to Group A, was charged in the murder of his former partner (April 2004). They were not living together at the time, and although he had been doing well in the program, once he began to drink heavily again the violence resumed.\(^\text{14}\)

None of the offenders who attended the second session, (Group A, beginning January 2004) and who graduated in May 2004, had re-offended as of March 31, 2005

None of the offenders in session three (Group B, beginning October 2004) has offended as of March 31, 2005.

Although these findings are based on a small number of cases over a relatively short period of time it is nevertheless an encouraging start. Follow-up over a longer period of time, and on a larger number of cases, will allow more certain information on the long-term sustainability of the positive effects of the SACP, for spousal abuse offenders who successfully complete the spousal assault counselling program as compared to those who do not complete it.

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\(^{13}\) Offenders who had completed the counseling program or were still in the program as of March 31, 2005.

\(^{14}\) Note that this particular offender did not have a criminal record before being given the opportunity to participate in this program through which the offender and victim received specialized counseling that would not likely have been available to them in absence of the SACP. It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to be able to conclude that the offender's participation in the program lead to the victim's death.
3.11. Document Review

3.11.1. Review of Quarterly Reports and Annual Reports

Quarterly reports submitted by the senior councillor were reviewed for information on program activities, outreach activities, training and any concerns throughout the pilot project.

Training: Both counsellors received various training in their first two years with the SACP. In January 2004, the coordinator/counsellor trained with the Yukon Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court, and in June 2004 she attended a three-day session on group counselling in Dawson City.

The assistant counsellor attended a four-day course on spousal abuse counselling in Whitehorse, Yukon, which included facilitating group sessions with abusers and victims, and participated in a three-day session in Iqaluit for suicide prevention. In March 2005, he attended a four-day workshop on family violence in Saskatoon.

In August 2004, both counsellors received training in counselling for nine days at a workshop in Quataq, Quebec, conducted by Singing Water Ministries of Orangeville, Ontario, which involved instruction from five Inuit counsellors.

The quarterly and annual reports (i.e. activity reporting) provided good information about the Program’s implementation and operation. Data collection sheets to collect performance management information were prepared by Justice Canada, but were not being completed systematically. Without these data sheets, it is difficult to track the number of offenders in the program and their progress. A more permanent written record of each referral needs to be kept on file.

3.12. Changes to the Program:

The manual recommended giving victims a safety plan well into the program, but this was changed so that victims receive this safety plan at the first meeting with the counsellor.

During the pilot project, several new aspects were added including couples counselling, guest speakers and more videos on anger management, violence, and the effects of family violence on children. The intake form is considered very thorough and actually allows the offender and counsellor to begin dealing with issues immediately at the intake stage.
In May 2004, the Department of Justice Canada assigned a back-up counsellor to the program.

In February 2005, a contractor was hired to review and revise the program manual with the counsellors.

3.13. Special Issues in Northern Communities

Isolation and bad weather make life challenging in the North. To take training, the counsellors must often leave for several days at a time. A trip from Rankin Inlet to Dawson City requires three days’ air travel, via Vancouver and Whitehorse, so a three-day course requires nine days away, provided no flights are cancelled because of bad weather.

The winter weather in Rankin Inlet can be very severe, and group sessions sometimes have to be cancelled and made up later, extending the length of the program.

A lack of services means that clients often cannot be referred elsewhere, and even if the services are available, clients may face a long wait.

Court is held only about once a month, so offenders who are referred sometimes must wait months before there are enough referrals to form a new spousal assault counselling group.

3.14. Positive Outcomes from the Program

One unexpected outcome was that seven of the eight women in the victim counselling session had become employed or joined a skills development course. Some victims said their children were happier at home and improving at school.

Some offenders and victims have referred others to the program, and although those referrals did not qualify for the court-appointed program, they were referred to the outreach counsellor.

Four counsellors were added to the outreach program, which grew much larger than originally anticipated and received financial support from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. As of January 2005, it was renamed the Kivalliq Outreach Program, and continues to work in tandem with the SACP to address family violence prevention and recovery.

The connection to the birthing centre was unexpected but welcome, as pregnancy sometimes triggers the cycle of violence, or increases the severity of violence.
Spousal abuse is now being talked about more in Rankin Inlet; people are coming forward to get help and support even without the court referral process.

3.15. Positive Effects of the Program on Children

Children who witness violence in the home can develop emotional problems, which can manifest in bullying behaviour, and/or poor school performance. These children can eventually develop abusive behaviour. The 21 offenders who completed the program had a total of 52 children in their families. Stopping the cycle of violence in this generation has the potential to reduce family violence in future generations. One of the most gratifying outcomes of the program is that parents, offenders and victims report that their children are happier at home, less nervous and fearful, performing better in school, spending more positive time with their fathers, and showing awareness of more appropriate ways to deal with conflict in the home.

3.16. Summary of Direct Outcomes and Ultimate Impacts

Listed below are the expected direct outcomes from the program and a summary of the evaluation findings for each, based on evidence from personal interviews, offenders’ and victims’ file reviews, document reviews, and RCMP recidivism statistics. It is important to stress that the findings are based on a small number of cases in a short period of time.

- Refer eligible offenders to the program: From October 2002 to October 2004, 31 offenders were referred to the program by the court. A fourth counselling group was formed in March 2005 with eight new court referrals.
- Ensure offenders attend and complete counselling: Of 31 referrals, 21 faithfully attended group and individual counselling sessions, and successfully completed the program.
- Treat offenders in their community: None of the 21 offenders in the program were sent away for incarceration (as they might have been without the program), and some offenders were referred to Elders and other counsellors in the community for additional counselling.
- Provide counselling to victims while meeting their needs for safety: Although initially reluctant, 14 victims attended group sessions or received individual counselling from the assistant counsellor; eight in one group and six in another. The seven victims, who did not participate in the program were provided with helpful information on safety and prepared a Safety Plan with the counsellor soon after their partner entered the counselling program.
- Reduce the likelihood of spousal abuse after completing the program: Recidivism information from the RCMP indicates that only one offender who completed the program subsequently was charged with assault – against a male. Charges were stayed while the offender repeated the complete program again, and has not since re-offended. There were 10 offenders who dropped out of the program or who had been referred, but never attended or who did not meet the criteria.

- Raise awareness of family violence issues in the community: Based on media coverage and the outreach activities it seems that the SACP is well known in Rankin Inlet and across the Nunavut Territory, and is well known to Nunavut Justice, which has agreed to fund it for another year and is considering expanding it to other Nunavut communities. The chief judge in Nunavut was supportive of the program from the outset and after conducting a circuit court in Rankin Inlet wrote a letter (July 2, 2004) to the coordinator/counsellor to praise the program for the impressive number of graduates, some of whom say the program has changed their lives. A recent graduate of the offenders’ counselling program also wrote a letter to the Nunatsiaq News in support of the program.

- Schedule treatment so that offenders don’t have to miss work: Only one offender asked for and received time off from work to attend the counselling sessions. All others indicated in the personal interviews that they did not have to miss work to attend the counselling.

The two ultimate impacts expected from the program are:

- to reduce spousal abuse; and

- to change the existence of underlying dynamics in relationships that lead to spousal abuse.

If the program continues in its current form, with the support of other community partners, these objectives can be achieved over time.
4. OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Implementation and Administration

Although the program took some time to get established and suffered some setbacks when the first two counsellors quit, the subsequent counsellors connected with other community resources, gained the cooperation of justice officials and the trust of the community. The counsellors have become strong advocates of the program, promoting it in Rankin Inlet and throughout Nunavut.

In July 2004, the Honourable Justice B. Brown of Nunavut Court of Justice wrote to the SACP to commend the counsellors for their work with the offenders.

Counsellors and clients are committed and conscientious. Attendance of both offenders and victims is excellent. If a victim must miss a group session, the counsellor will visit her at home and review the material she missed. He also calls the victims between the twice-weekly group sessions to check on them and make sure everything is going well at home.

It is recommended that the counsellors complete, on an ongoing basis, the data collection sheets developed for the program by Justice Canada. The sheets will help with future evaluations and ensure that the information is readily available and always up to date for all stakeholders.

4.2. Effectiveness

The program is now on track and should continue to see positive results. Counsellors are following up with the victims and offenders, and will continue to do so for up to six months after they graduate from the program.

These long-term outcomes are being achieved in Rankin Inlet:

- to reduce spousal abuse; and
- to change the underlying dynamics in relationships that lead to spousal abuse.
To assess the longer-term effects of the program, it is recommended that recidivism statistics be checked again with the RCMP in Rankin Inlet and the Crown prosecutor in Iqaluit, one year, eighteen months and two years after the graduation dates.

It is also recommended that the counsellors keep exit interviews with the offenders who successfully complete the program.

It is recommended that there be an exit interview of victims who are still in relationships with offenders, even if the victims haven’t participated in the program, to get a sense of whether they feel there have been improvements with the offender in the home.

It is recommended to link the results of an offender’s exit interview with the exit interview of the victim whom he pleaded guilty to assaulting to see if they are in agreement about the changes that have taken place in their home.

It is recommended that there be an assessment of the impact of the follow-up sessions on the program resources.

Outreach activities would potentially benefit school-age children who witness violence at home and the persons who work with those children. However, this evaluation was not designed to fully assess the impact of outreach activities that will be possible with the new Community Outreach program.

It is recommended that a separate evaluation of the Outreach Program be conducted in a few years.

4.3. Continuing Need

There is a continuing need for the program in Rankin Inlet. Even offenders who have not been referred by the court, or do not meet the eligibility criteria, are asking to be admitted to address their spousal assault problems. Counsellors are referring people to the victims’ assistance program, and to the alcohol and outreach programs for counselling.

The victims and offenders spoke very highly of the counsellors; they enjoy the group sessions and genuinely feel the program is helping them. Offenders feel the program is needed in Rankin Inlet, that it is achieving positive results for the participants, and that they would like it to continue. In March 2005, one of the offenders who had completed the program wrote to the
Nunatsiaq newspaper in support of the SACP, indicating that it would be beneficial for all communities in Nunavut.

Improving communication skills is an empowering asset for dealing with family violence. Developing a sense of “self” and “self-esteem” is an important positive effect for the offenders. For the victims, it is important to learn to identify abuse and set boundaries. Promoting healthy relationships will bring positive effects to the entire community.

Finally, this pilot project, which is beginning to show positive results, should secure ongoing funding.

**It is recommended that the program seek a source of ongoing funding and that the need for more staff be assessed for its impact on funding.**

4.4. **Transferability**

The program could potentially benefit other Nunavut communities, but each community must develop a program specific to its own needs to ensure it is supported. Interested communities could send potential counsellors to Rankin Inlet to experience first-hand how the program works, to benefit from the experience of the counsellors in Rankin Inlet, and to see how the steering committee, casework/advisory committee and the Elders work together to ensure the success of the program.

As one interviewee pointed out:

> “The manuals are only tools, and are not meant to replace the training and the extensive consultation and preparation that took place within the community to have such a program.”

**It is recommended that any community wishing to adopt this spousal assault counselling program engage the support and participation of key agencies in their community to develop and guide the program.**

Without this program, the social, employment, health and safety consequences to the community would be dealt with in ways that are much more expensive. The emotional damage to victims and to the children who witness family violence cannot be ignored. Physical injury and death are the real costs of not treating the offenders who would otherwise continue their abusive behaviour.