

RADICAL FEMINISM IN ACTION?:
A HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE ST. JOHN'S
RAPE CRISIS CENTRE AND ITS VOLUNTEERS
(1977-1990)

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**RADICAL FEMINISM IN ACTION?:
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AND ITS VOLUNTEERS
(1977-1990)**

**by
Lynn Hartery**

**A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master's of Women's Studies**

**Women's Studies
Memorial University of Newfoundland**

April 2002

St. John's

Newfoundland

Abstract

The St. John's Rape Crisis Centre was first established in 1977 as the Rape Crisis Committee of the Newfoundland Status of Women Council. Now known as the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, this feminist organisation has provided assistance to victims of sexual assault for more than two decades, mainly through a 24-hour volunteer crisis line. The RCC has helped many women deal with the aftermath of an assault and has also played a major role in educating the public and relevant agencies about the prevalence and effects of sexual violence against women. Relying on interviews and archival research, my thesis documents the vital work of women in this volunteer feminist organisation (1977-1990) and explores the organisation, philosophies and activities of this important component in the history of the women's movement in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Acknowledgements

To Dr. Linda Kealey and Dr. Diane Tye, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for supervising this thesis. It takes good mentors to guide students through this process feeling both supported and independent. Thank you for your guidance and patience.

To the women I interviewed, thank you for your commitment to help victims/survivors of rape through your volunteer work. I greatly appreciate your willingness to share with me, and the readers of my work, your experiences, thoughts and feelings about your involvement with the St. John's Rape Crisis Centre.

The members of my thesis group were a wonderful support throughout the researching and writing of my thesis. They have not only made this endeavour easier, but working with them has enhanced my overall experience of graduate school. Thank you Laura, Brenda and Stephanie. Thanks to the other students, faculty and staff of the Women's Studies program at Memorial University. I want to thank especially Dr. Phyllis Artiss, who encouraged me to pursue this degree and has been a constant support throughout my graduate career.

To my partner, Stephen and my family and friends who put up with the expression of many mixed, and seemingly contradictory, emotions throughout this process – thank you for your love and concern.

I would like to acknowledge the financial assistance of the School of Graduate Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Sally Davis scholarship fund and the Women's Association of Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Appendices	viii
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	2
The St. John's Rape Crisis Centre	2
Introduction to the Participants	4
Thesis Questions	5
The Researcher	7
Writing History	10
Why document a history of the Rape Crisis Centre?	14
Methodology	17
Documents	18
Interviews	20
Ethical Considerations	25
For the Participants and Researcher	25
For the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre	27
Limitations of the Research	28
Outline	30
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW ..	32
The Second Wave of the Women's Movement in Canada	32
Writing about the Second Wave	36
The Anti-Rape Movement	38
Rape: The Law and Legal Reform	46
Law Reform Commission of Canada	49
The Change from Rape to Sexual Assault	51
Canadian Rape Crisis Centres and the National Organisation	52
Conclusion	57
CHAPTER 3: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ST. JOHN'S RAPE CRISIS CENTRE	60
Newfoundland Status of Women Council: 1972-76	60
The Establishment of the Rape Crisis Committee 1977-78	67
The Rape Crisis Centre 1979	75
The Relationship Between the RCC and the NSWC in the 1980s	78
Conclusion	85

CHAPTER 4: THE PHILOSOPHIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE	
ST. JOHN'S RAPE CRISIS CENTRE	89
The Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC)	90
The St. John's RCC's Analysis of Rape and Violence against Women	93
Group Organisation	95
Roles Within the RCC	99
Crisis Intervention Model	100
Feminism	101
Activities	103
Meetings	104
The Crisis Line	105
Training of New Volunteers	108
Take Back the Night (TBTN)	111
Presentations and Publications	113
Public Education on Child Sexual Abuse	115
Finances and Fundraising	117
Conclusion	119
CHAPTER 5: VOLUNTEERING AT THE RCC	122
Coming to the RCC	123
Benefits from Volunteering at the RCC	125
Leaving the RCC	128
Feminism	131
The Volunteers	133
Diane Duggan (1942-1989)	134
Wendy Williams	139
Ruth Roach Pierson	140
June Petten	141
Mary Doyle	143
Mary Aylward	144
Cathy Duke	145
Beth Lacey	146
Pam Thomas	147
Janet Lee Chafe	148
Role of Lesbians in Anti-Violence Work and the RCC	149
Conclusion	154
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	157
Was the RCC a Radical Feminist Organisation?	158
Comment on Other Findings	161
Structure of Feminist Organisations	161

CHAPTER SIX: continued	
The Contribution of Lesbians	162
The Relationship Between the Women's Center and the Rape Crisis Centre	162
Reflections	163
Recommendations for Future Research	164
BIBLIOGRAPHY	168
APPENDICES	176

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant-Volunteer Timeline	176
Appendix 2: Letter of Introduction	177
Appendix 3: Newspaper Advertisement	178
Appendix 4: Consent Form	179
Appendix 5: Interview Guide	180
Appendix 6: Chronological History of the RCC	182

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

Women have been on the forefront of combating violence against women on many levels. Lobbying for political change, challenging stereotypes and establishing shelters and services for victims constitute some of the organised responses of women and women's groups. From the 1970s, one channel for protesting violence against women has been the organisation of rape crisis centres that offer assistance to victims of rape while fighting society's tolerance for violence against women.¹ The St. John's Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) was founded in 1977 as part of this larger movement to help victims of rape and to increase public awareness of the problem of sexual assault. My thesis describes the establishment of the RCC and the services offered by its volunteers. The story of the St. John's RCC is intertwined with that of the Newfoundland Status of Women Council (NSWC) as the RCC began as a Committee of the NSWC.² My research on the RCC, therefore, necessitated a review of the history of the NSWC and the relationship that developed between these two organisations. The RCC was established in the context of a

¹Although I recognise the validity of the term "survivor," I choose to use the word "victim" in this context. Considering that crisis intervention work is often done with a woman who is still struggling with the aftermath of a rape or rape attempt, I believe "victim" is more appropriate at these stages.

²The Newfoundland Status of Women Council, formed in 1972, changed its name to the St. John's Status of Women Council in 1984 to more accurately reflect its membership and focus, and to acknowledge other Status of Women Councils that arose around the province. In this paper I will refer to the organisation as the Newfoundland Status of Women Council or NSWC. The NSWC was the umbrella organisation that later opened the St. John's Women's Centre.

national movement, so to provide background I examine the second wave of the English Canadian women's movement and the anti-rape movement in particular. I review what was happening on the Canadian scene in the 1970s outlining the pervasive concepts and ideas pertaining to rape.

In my exploration of the RCC, I consider whether the St. John's RCC was an example of a radical feminist organisation as defined by the literature of the 1970s and 1980s. I also discuss important legal changes that occurred in the early 1980s, reconceptualizing "rape" as "sexual assault" in the Criminal Code of Canada.

What is the history of the St. John's Rape Crisis Centre? Who were these women who volunteered their time and efforts to assisting rape victims and what were their experiences at the RCC? Was the St. John's RCC a radical feminist group? To answer these questions, I rely on documents from the Newfoundland Status of Women Council, as well as interviews conducted with women who were involved with the Centre. In Chapter 6, I also reflect on the process of attempting to piece together and critically analyse the work of a local feminist organisation.

Introduction

The St. John's Rape Crisis Centre

The St. John's Rape Crisis Centre, currently named the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, is an organisation run by women

volunteers.³ The main objectives of the Centre are to help educate people about sexual assault and to assist victims of sexual assault by offering crisis intervention on a 24-hour crisis line. Volunteers of the RCC are trained and educated about the prevalence of sexual assault, the aftermath for victims of an assault and how to assist victims in a manner that is sensitive and non-judgmental. They are given information about medical services, counselling, legal issues and police resources. This information can be passed on to women who use the crisis line and the general public through presentations and pamphlets.

Volunteers provide presentations for schools and other organisations as well as organize public events such as "Take Back the Night," an annual march for women and children protesting women's vulnerability to violence. There is a high turnover rate of volunteers and training for new volunteers is held once or twice a year. Usually there are, at the most, about ten to twelve active volunteers at any one time. Periodically, money has been available from the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC) to employ a part-time co-ordinator and from government to hire students in the summer.⁴ I was a volunteer at the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre for sixteen months, from September 1997-December 1998, during which time I

³This information comes from my volunteer experience at the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre in 1997 and 1998. I am unaware of the process that led to changing the name of the organisation in the 1990s. It is not uncommon to still hear the organisation being referred to as the "Rape Crisis Centre." I will refer to it as such (RCC) throughout the remainder of my thesis.

⁴See Chapter 4 for more information on CASAC.

participated in the activities and events of the Centre.

Introduction to the Participants

In Chapter Five, I describe the experiences of the women interviewed. As I do refer to the interviews in earlier chapters, it seems more fitting to briefly introduce them here. As records were scarce and the women did not always recollect exactly when they were part of the RCC, I am offering estimated time frames (see Appendix 1).

Diane Duggan was identified by nearly all the women I interviewed as the founding person of the RCC. Diane was the chair of the Rape Crisis Committee that later became the Rape Crisis Centre. Her involvement and work in the RCC is considered in Chapter Five in more depth than the other volunteers, since she was the longest standing member, working within the RCC until her death in 1989. Wendy Williams was more intimately connected with the Women's Centre and the NSWC in the early 1970s and was involved in the buying of the property on Military Road which served as the Women's Centre. Wendy volunteered with the RCC, as well, taking her turn on the crisis line and participating in training of new volunteers. Ruth Roach Pierson was also involved with both the Women's Centre and the RCC. She spent time on the RCC crisis line in the late 1970s. Mary Doyle was one of the first group of women from outside the Women's Centre to be trained as a RCC volunteer and remained an active member until 1989. June Petten also believes she was part of the first group of volunteers, in the late 1970s. Mary Aylward is now in her late 70s and remembers volunteering back when the RCC was fairly

new. Although we could not calculate the exact dates, Mary figured it was the late 1970s. Cathy Duke started with a workterm placement at the Women's Centre and returned to volunteer with the RCC when she graduated from Memorial University of Newfoundland, also in the 1970s.

Beth Lacey was co-ordinator of the NSWC Women's Centre from 1983 to 1987 and handled the RCC crisis line during her daytime work hours. Pam Thomas became a volunteer in the mid-1980s and remained involved until 1989, when she and one other volunteer took over the RCC for several months while there was few volunteers. After training a new group, Pam stopped volunteering but actually went back again a few years later and again volunteered for a year. Janet Lee Chafe volunteered with the RCC in the late 1980s, possibly into 1990. She came to the RCC from Iris Kirby House, a shelter for abused women. Janet availed of the services of Iris Kirby House to escape an abusive partner.

The methods by which I found and interviewed these women will be outlined later in this chapter.

Thesis Questions

My first goal for this thesis was to gather and compile the documents and written sources of information pertaining to the RCC. Together with interviews of women who were volunteers I hoped to piece together a history of the organization, as no such compilation existed. I also wanted to acknowledge the work of the RCC volunteers. I

believed that the RCC offered a valuable service to victims of sexual assault and that the organization, through its profile and public awareness, had helped change society's perception of sexual violence.

The third aspect of my investigation was to analyze the RCC in terms of its feminist philosophy. Most anti-violence organizations were, and still are to some extent, associated with radical feminism. In its most general formulation the goal of the radical feminist movement was the elimination of sex roles, or sexism (Koedt, Levine and Rapone vii). Radical feminism argued that an individual woman's problems were not in fact idiosyncratic, but rather were a product of sexist ideology and institutions. One of the most defining characteristics of radical feminism was its rejection of the state. The patriarchal system, according to radical feminists, needed to be uprooted, not reformed. The fight was not to get women into social and cultural institutions, but to change the institutions. The distinction often made by radical feminists was that they were fighting for women's "liberation" from sex role stereotyping, while other feminists fought for women's "rights" to take equal places with men. The issue of physical violence against women was seen by radical feminists as the ultimate example of men exercising power over women's bodies. My question then, was whether the RCC was a radical feminist organization. I explore different feminisms and their basis in Chapter Two.

The Researcher

I believe it is important for readers to know more about me as a researcher and writer than the fact that I am a Women's Studies graduate student and a former volunteer of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre. Knowing more about my background and my goals in writing this thesis will help the reader to better understand my perspective as well as assist me in acknowledging my own subject positions.

I have always felt an awareness of being treated differently as a girl and young woman. From the gendered division of chores in our home to differential treatment by teachers and school principals throughout my school years, I knew that expectations were different for boys and girls. I saw restrictions placed on me and on my behaviour because of my gender. This early awareness gradually developed into a rejection of sexism and other social injustices. When I was fourteen I became involved in a grass-roots organisation called Youth for Social Justice which brought young people together to discuss issues such as illiteracy, poverty, oppression, racism and sexism. Weeklong camps involved discussions of injustices and inequities, thus heightening my awareness and interest. In high school my essays and projects focused on violence against women, sexual harassment and gender inequality. In university, I took Women's Studies undergraduate courses and found like-minded individuals with whom I could converse, discuss and work against these injustices. I became involved with the Women's Resource Centre at Memorial University of Newfoundland and later decided to volunteer at the RCC.

As a volunteer at the RCC, I experienced a wonderful sense of belonging. There, I met others who were saddened and outraged at the injustices that women face every day. I met women who were angry that their gender made them vulnerable to assault and who wanted to help improve the quality of life for all women by working for change. The training required and provided by the RCC was extensive. For four Saturdays we listened to information from a Royal Newfoundland Constabulary representative, a Crown Attorney, a physician who was on the Sexual Assault team, a psychologist, a rape survivor and others who would help us explore our own feelings and ideas about sexual assault, as well as give information that would help us to help callers. Like others at the Centre, I was prepared for the task of being available to help women who called the crisis line.

What I was unprepared for was the amount of work involved in keeping the Centre operational. I found myself tired of spending time fundraising and doing other tasks that were necessary but which took a lot of energy. It seemed we were going month to month never knowing whether there was enough money to pay basic costs. I left the Centre after sixteen months to move on to other things because I felt I could no longer invest as much time and energy as it seemed to require.

I was surprised at how much effort went into fundraising to pay for rent and the crisis line and I wondered how volunteers before us had dealt with these issues. There was little information available about former activities or volunteers of the Centre and in fact, there was no historical documentation at the office at all, even though the RCC had been open for more than twenty years. My interest in the Centre became less focused on

current activities and broadened to encompass the whole history of the Centre. How had it started? Who else had voluntarily handled crisis calls before this group? I decided that this would be a very useful and valuable project for my thesis – to record the history of the Centre by compiling any existing information and interviewing the women who had been involved with the organisation over the years.

As a researcher, I do not claim to approach this subject with objectivity. Part of my appreciation for the work and contributions of such groups came from my experiences as a Rape Crisis volunteer. I started this project with the opinion that work of this organisation and others like it was valuable and necessary. I also wanted to help facilitate the continued existence of the Centre. My intention is to present, as accurately as possible, the stories of the women I interviewed and with that, piece together some of the history of the RCC. That said, the narrative that I have helped construct with the women I interviewed will not be *the* history. I do not believe that for a particular event, there is one true story, but rather that there many truths and many interpretations of a particular event.

It is important to acknowledge that not only are there different interpretations of the events at the RCC, there are stories that conflict with each other. The women I interviewed sometimes gave different reports of the philosophy of the Centre. Although there is the possibility that participants were purposely untruthful, this more likely is a reflection of the variety of experiences and positions held by those within the organisation. Not all of the women could remember others that were involved at the same time.

The researcher's current ideology shapes the construction of memory (Sangster 8), as well as the context of the narrative, including who is interviewed and for what purpose. As Joan Sangster writes, the "interview is a historical document created by the agency of both the interviewer and interviewee"(10). As with any research project, the process and end product is necessarily influenced by my biases. I started volunteering at the RCC with the belief that RCCs were necessary for women and provided a service that benefited victims of sexual assault. I began this research project with the same sentiment and hope that the women who did the work would be acknowledged and appreciated. These biases no doubt came through in my interviews and shaped the responses and tone of the interviews. In the final product I have made judgements about what is relevant, and ultimately what has been included and omitted. What I have chosen to write about is very much a result of who I am and what my experiences have been.

Writing History

In her book, Why History Matters, feminist historian Gerda Lerner defines history as the "... archives of human experience and of the thoughts of past generations; history is our collective memory" (52). Women are half of humankind and have carried out half the world's work and duties, thus constitute half the human experience. Yet in recorded history, women are marginalised. This "selective forgetting" is grounded in patriarchal values which present and record the activities of men as inherently more significant and important than those of women. This lack of recorded information is consistent with the

notion of traditional history as a record of important men and public activity. History, traditionally, has been considered in male-centred terms. Women have been left out often because the questions asked were inappropriate for women.

The study of women's history emerged out of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s as well as a scholarly interest in social movements such as the suffrage campaign (Kealey 961-62; Thurner 122-46). Initially, the field's concentration tended to be in three major areas: historical ideals of femininity, biographies of the "great women" or "women worthies," and analyses of collective women's movements (Thurner 123). The "great women" were comparable to the "great men" of history. Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice believe that endeavours to unveil female heroines had important morale-building value, "insofar as they reveal[ed] to women precedents for their participation in the public realm ..." and provided "... examples of the public exercise of female energy and competence" (41). However, in time, historians realised that these approaches were imitations of the standards and parameters of traditional history. They were merely fitting women into the definitions of traditional historical figures.

Feminist historians became increasingly interested in developing new conceptual models that better reflected their questions and concerns. Joan Wallach Scott challenges the framework of conventional history in her introduction and use of the term "herstory," which she defines as researching and documenting history that makes women and women's activities the focus of inquiry (18-19). Scott lists three possible uses for a herstory. It can demonstrate women's essential likeness to men as historical subjects as it

attempts to fit new subjects (women) into accepted historical categories, as was the case in earlier studies that told the stories of women rulers and heroines who achieved wealth or status for example. It may also be used to challenge accepted interpretations of progress or regress as June Sochen writes in Herstory: A Woman's View of American

History:

The history of the United States is a grand success story from one point of view and a grand failure from another. It is a story of the growth, expansion, and development of a continent – and at the same time the story of the destruction of the native American Indian population and the despoliation of the natural landscape. It is the story of material accumulation and human impoverishment. It is the rhetoric of freedom and the reality of repressing women, blacks, and American Indians (3).

There is also a different sort of investigation that “departs from the framework of conventional history and offers a new narrative, different periodization and different causes. It can be used to illuminate the structures of both ordinary women’s lives as well as those of notable women, and to discover the nature of the feminist or female consciousness that motivated their behaviour” (Scott 19). The central aspect of this approach is a focus on female agency; on the active role played by women in their history and on the qualities of women’s experiences that distinguish them from men’s. This recognition of a “women’s culture” took place amid the emergence of studies dealing with moments of history when such a culture still existed and could be recorded (Dauphin et al. 65). Evidence consists of women’s expressions, ideas and actions. The herstory approach has consequences for historical scholarship. It refutes the claim that women have no history or significant contributions. It goes further to alter the standards of historical

significance and demonstrates that sex and gender need to be conceptualised in historical terms (Scott 20).

Books exploring women in history can reach as far back as the seventeenth century to tell us about women writers and other women who left records. For example, Susan Wiseman and Isobel Grundy explore women and writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century in their book Women, Writing, History: 1640 – 1740. In opening the field of women's history, feminist scholars felt compelled to emphasise the contributions of women, sometimes neglecting class and ethnic biases. Earlier studies also paid little attention to the different experiences of immigrant, disabled, lesbian and non-white women. However, as the field has developed, feminist historians have become critical of their own methodologies and approaches. More recent works attempt to include the voices of all women, including those who were previously left out of white, North American women's history. Carolyn Ross Johnston, in her article "In the White Woman's Image" reviews recent contributions to ongoing explorations of Native American history and the field of black women's historiography is examined in Fon Louise Gordon's essay, "The Emergence of Black Women's History" (Johnston 205-18; Gordon 127-36). Not a Passing Phase: Reclaiming Lesbians in History 1840-1985 is another example of attempts to document the lives of marginalised women, in this case, lesbian women. Contemporary research interest in race, ethnicity, class and other identities is grounded in current political discussions and debates. As Dubinsky et al. assert, the issues and concerns of the 1970s women's movement shaped women's history, just as today's women's movement informs

feminist history (xx). This growing body of literature not only records women's work and contributions to society but challenges the accepted notion of history.

In their research, feminist historians reflect their own concerns and inclinations about what is worthy of study and those of their times. As a feminist researcher, I see my research project as an integral link to what other feminist historians have done before me. My interests are grounded in a desire to acknowledge and document a very important contribution of a group of Newfoundland women; an example of how women work together to provide a service that is needed in their community. I want to make their work and contribution public and a part of our province's history. Although I do not believe that all women are the same or their experiences identical, I do believe there are historically constructed gender differences, resulting in a "gendered experience." I agree with Lerner that "all of women's history deals with subjects who are gendered women, women functioning under patriarchy and with the weight of a gendered past on their shoulders" (208). To compensate for the androcentric bias that has clouded history, my research topic and approach are woman-centred.

Why document a history of the Rape Crisis Centre?

As I learned more about the RCC and became involved in its activities, I realised that it provided an invaluable service to the people of this province and one that was unique in its focus on victims of sexual assault. I was surprised to learn that it was not government-funded and that all the people there, with the exception of one part-time co-

ordinator, were volunteers. My continued involvement with the RCC strengthened my commitment to the Centre and its mandate. I expressed interest in looking back through the years to see what other volunteer groups there had done: what were their goals and visions for the centre, how had the centre changed in the twenty years since it opened? Why was there no documentation of past volunteers or activities, when the RCC had been around since the 1970s?

There are several plausible explanations for the lack of recorded information. The women who established the St. John's Rape Crisis Centre were volunteers. Perhaps, in the beginning, nobody thought that the Centre would last as long as it has, or perhaps it was decided that documenting the activities would not be useful. The women, who likely had full-time or part-time paid labour, as well as families to attend to, might have found their volunteering so demanding, there was no time for record keeping. Perhaps concern for protecting the confidentiality of the users of the Centre and the crisis line translated into not creating any sort of documentation system or destroying documents, if they were created. Over the years, papers could have been lost, misplaced, or scattered among volunteers. Whatever the reason for the lack of documentation, I believed it was important to compile anything that was relevant to the Centre. Even though there was no obvious collection of materials, I imagined there might be documents at the NSW Women's Centre, where the RCC was once housed, or in individuals' personal possession. I also knew that there were women in St. John's who were valuable resources in collecting information about the RCC, especially former volunteers.

My decision to document the history of the RCC is premised on Lerner's conviction that history serves to satisfy a variety of human needs. She writes that as memory, a documented history keeps alive the experiences, deeds and ideas of people of the past. It connects past and future and becomes a source of personal identity. As cultural tradition, history serves to unite diverse groups. As explanation, historical events become illustrations of philosophies and of broader interpretive frameworks. The past can become evidence, model, contrast to the present, symbol or challenge. Organisations, as well as groups of people (families, religious groups, nations) all rely on their history to tell them who they are, as well as where and what they came from. It is a source of pride for many. A distinct history gives groups value and credibility (Lerner 116-22).

I believe that it is important for the RCC to have a history for two main reasons. First, it will be a testament to the many women over the years who were dedicated enough to keep the Centre going, despite the hard work and commitment it took. The Rape Crisis Centre, like countless other women's organisations, is a testimony to women's attention to social justice issues. Where government and society fail, women have historically come together, organised themselves, and provided the service they deemed necessary. Documenting the history of the Rape Crisis Centre is an acknowledgement of the work and contribution of the individual women who made this service possible. Secondly, a history may provide a sense of continuity in a world where many women feel ostracised and alienated. Lerner writes that by grounding one's identity in some collectivity with a shared past – be that collectivity defined by race, sex, class, ethnicity, religion or

nationality – one acquires stability and basis for community (118). I would add “philosophy,” “activities,” and “struggles” to that list. The RCC is a place where women can connect with other women, and if there is a history there, they can place themselves among a long line of feminists who also fought for rights and social justice for women.

In my exploration of the impact of second-wave feminism in Canada, and the anti-rape movement of the 1970s, I draw on literature from both Women’s Studies and History. In searching through documents and archival material, my association with the field of historical research is evident, and the end product has obvious historical implications, as it will add to the history of the women’s movement in our province.

Methodology

In keeping with Scott’s ideas about research that focuses on women and women’s activities, one of my questions became “What is the herstory of the St. John’s Rape Crisis Centre?” To give an account of the activities of the RCC, I relied on documents from the NSWC, as well as interviews I conducted with women who were involved with the Centre. To provide a view of the RCC in the broader context of the women’s movement, I have relied on literature and writings about the establishment of other Canadian rape crisis centres. I also ask whether the RCC’s philosophy was a radical feminist one, as anti-violence organisations were generally considered to come from a radical feminist perspective. In my thesis, I also focus on the volunteers and try to describe what their volunteering meant to them.

In choosing this research topic, I had to consider the realistic limits of my resources and timeline. I chose to include the years 1977-1990 in order to impose a framework that would be manageable for a master's level thesis. Since there appeared to be no evidence of a herstory already documented, it seemed logical to begin at the beginning and include the establishment and early years of the RCC. I designated 1990 as the end date because in the history of the RCC, 1990 signifies the end of an era. Diane Duggan, who was central to the establishment and development of the RCC, died in 1989. After her death, two other volunteers stepped in to lead the organisation, bringing with them changes that would continue in the 1990s. As of 1990, the RCC was well established and still housed in the WC, allowing for the possibility of finding documentation among the boxes of material at the NSWC. These thirteen years constitute a significant period for the RCC and a broad enough timespan to observe changes and document established patterns.

Documents

My first step was to search for any existing documents from or pertaining to the Rape Crisis Centre. The present day Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre did not have any sort of documentation dating back before 1993. Looking through unorganised boxes of archival material at the Women's Centre, I found

very little that was directly related to the RCC.⁵ I did find it useful, however, to read through minutes of the meetings of the NSWC. The Rape Crisis Centre began as a committee of the NSWC, so there was relevant information about its establishment in the files of the NSWC.⁶ Logbooks, kept at the Women's Centre since its beginning, also revealed important information.⁷ In fact, these two sources, the minutes of NSWC meetings and the daily logbooks kept at the NSWC Women's Centre, became the focal documents for my research.

I continued to search for documentation in more public places, such as the Queen Elizabeth II Library (QE II) at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The QEII has an archival section, where one can search through microfilm copies of old newspapers. Using the meeting minutes and logbooks as guides, I found some newspaper articles about the RCC and others that quoted representatives of the RCC. I visited the Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS) located in the QE II, which keeps folders of local and provincial organisations and individuals on file. The Centre for Newfoundland Studies had

⁵The information gathered at the Women's Centre that was directly related to the RCC has been organised and deposited at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Documents are located within the CNS holdings, either independently (if there is an author, title and subject or within the "Rape Crisis Centre" vertical file.

⁶These documents have now been collected and deposited at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador: Status of Women Council, St. John's Women's Centre fonds, MG 1004.

⁷The logbooks remain at the St. John's Status of Women Council Women's Centre.

a small file of approximately five articles about the RCC and also kept a file on Diane Duggan. I viewed several tapes that have information about the RCC at the local Canadian Broadcasting Corporation television station.

I did not find a lot of documentation. Most of what I found were references to the RCC and not documents generated by the RCC. Prior to starting this research project, I talked informally with people and was prepared for this lack of written or printed information by and about the RCC. My goal, however, was not only to uncover what documentation existed, but also to combine that information with what women remembered about the RCC.

Interviews

Interviewing was a chosen research method in this instance because it “offers researchers access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words” (Reinharz 134). Generally oral histories describe a broad look at a woman’s life, whereas interviews focus on a particular experience or phenomenon (Reinharz 130). I see this research project as having facets of both. Oral testimony is invaluable for historians who face a lack of written documents, as I did. Reinharz reports that feminists have used oral history to “express affinity and admiration for other women” and to “explore the meaning of events in the eyes of women” (134). These aims are present in my research goals. Feminist oral history acknowledges not only the value of women’s lives, but their contributions to issues of social justice, as well. I share Reinharz’s belief that oral history

encourages identification among women through the recognition of common experiences (135). I hoped that my work might provide the RCC volunteers of yesterday and today with the sense of belonging and purpose that comes with having one's own history.

To find potential participants, I sent letters to several local women's organisations to introduce myself, describe my research and advertise that I was seeking to interview women who had volunteered at the RCC (see Appendix 2). I placed advertisements in two Memorial University newspapers: the Muse and the Gazette, as well as a Letter to the Editor of the Telegram requesting that former volunteers contact me (see Appendix 3). These methods did not prove very productive as they netted only two volunteers. Using the minutes of NSWC meetings, I compiled a list of names of women who had expressed interest in rape crisis services. I sent these names to one of my supervisors who advised me to seek assistance from two other women who were in St. John's and involved in the women's movement in the 1970s. I sent the list to Jane Robinson at the Women's Centre and Dorothy Robbins of Women's Policy Office of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador asking whether they might be able to shed some light on the whereabouts of the women. I looked through local directories to find telephone numbers and telephoned about a dozen people. One woman said she had never been involved with the RCC. Five women returned my call, one of whom was not a former volunteer of the RCC but had worked closely with the organisation. I also did a search on the Internet and attempted to email some former volunteers. Three former volunteers responded to inquiries over email. That is how I collected the names of the interviewees.

I interviewed, in person, eight of the ten women whose experiences I relate in Chapter Five. Information about the late Diane Duggan, who was central to the establishment and continuation of the RCC, was gleaned from the interviews and print sources, such as newspaper articles. The other woman I did not interview personally was Ruth Roach Pierson, who answered my questions over e-mail from Toronto.

I interviewed the eight women in various locations.⁸ One interview took place at a coffee shop, one at a hotel, three at the woman's place of work, two at my apartment and one in a woman's home. At each interview I brought two copies of the consent form (see Appendix 4). The consent form outlined how I intended to protect the identities of women who did not wish to be identified, and my plan to allow them the opportunity to review the part of the thesis that pertains to their interview and/or involvement with RCC. The consent form also stated that the woman had the right to refuse to answer any questions, to end the interview at any time and to withdraw from the research project at any time during the research phase. Information about how the data I collected would be recorded, stored and distributed was included as well. In a later contact, the participants were given more specific information about where the research materials would be kept. I asked each woman to read the consent form and to circle appropriate responses. We both signed two consent forms. I wrote my telephone number on their copy so they would know how to reach me and would have a copy for their records.

⁸See bibliography for specific interview dates.

As it happened, none of the women wished to remain anonymous and only one indicated that she was not interested in reviewing the thesis at a later date.⁹ All of the participants answered all my questions and remained in the project for the duration. I found the women very forthcoming in their descriptions of their involvement with the RCC. I believe all participants answered my questions to the best of their knowledge. In fact, many women shared very personal stories with me that related to their involvement with the RCC or things that were happening in their lives at that time. For the most part, the interviews ended when I indicated I did not have any more questions. All of the women agreed to be audiotaped, although some women did indicate for me to not record parts of their interview and others are actually taped saying things "off the record." I gave each participant an opportunity to voice concerns or ask questions. Most did not have questions but indicated interest in what I would find as I carried out the research.

The interview was semi-structured, as I had an interview schedule but only consulted it periodically (see Appendix 5). I hoped that this would allow the women to talk about what was most meaningful for them. What they decided to talk about first, or at great length, would indicate what they considered to be a prominent aspect of the RCC, or was particularly relevant to them. Also, this method would allow the women to relate the connections they had made without my influencing the organisation of their thoughts and opinions. This, I hoped, minimised the danger that my prepared questions might

⁹This participant did review her contributions later, when I offered to send them to her over email.

unduly influence the women's responses with ideas of what I was looking for and, as a researcher, what aspects I deemed important.

I asked the participants to start by telling me what they remembered about their initial contact with the RCC. I referred to the interview schedule periodically to maintain some level of consistency across interviews and to ensure we had covered the different areas I was interested in, in addition to what the participant chose to talk about. I always gave the participants a chance to add anything at the end of the interview, when I had no further questions. Some of the women inquired about who else I had contacted or interviewed, and also about my findings thus far. At such an early stage, however, I did not feel comfortable talking about findings or the names of other participants. Interviews lasted about an hour. I asked participants to call me if they remembered anything else after the interview was finished. There were no follow-up calls to give more information.

I transcribed each interview in full within two or three weeks of the interview. Through recording, listening and finally reading each interview, I felt I had ample opportunity to familiarise myself with each woman's contribution and begin analysis of the data as an entity. Almost a year after the initial interview, I contacted the participants again via telephone or email. I sent each woman excerpts from my thesis, which included all references to that person and their interview with enough text to provide context for the statements. Participants were asked to contact me within three weeks to give feedback and to allow for timely submission of the final document.

Six of the women contacted me and there were a few suggestions for minor changes that would clarify parts of their contribution. One asked that I edit a quotation, for example, that she felt was a little incoherent and another elaborated on what she meant by a particular sentence. One participant inquired about my analysis of how the volunteers felt about leaving and my assertion that they needed to have a "legitimate reason" to do so. I asked if she disagreed with this analysis, but she only voiced concern that it would not be clear to readers that it was *my* analysis, as it closely followed contributions from her interview. For the most part, the participants were pleased with my interpretations of their interviews.

Ethical Considerations

For the Participants and the Researcher

I was committed to interviewing the participants sensitively and presenting their contributions as accurately as possible. My obligation to each participant spanned the entire process however, which included considering possible consequences for the participant as a result of participating in this research. This influenced my decision about what information to include in the final document. Throughout this research process I gained knowledge about very personal details of people's lives and circumstances. I have included what I considered relevant to the history of the RCC, as I collected the data. In hindsight, I can see I was guilty of attempting to "stick to the facts" and in doing so, missed opportunities to further explore the sometimes very intricate overlap between

"work at the RCC" and the personal lives of the women. Even though none of the women indicated that they would like to remain anonymous, I had to consider how their participation and contributions, as well as my documentation of them, could negatively affect them in ways they might not anticipate. In Chapter Five, I explore the personal experiences of the women who were involved in the RCC and what their participation meant to them. Some interesting questions emerged from my research that deserve further analysis, such as that of lesbian involvement.

Despite my observation that the work and activism of lesbians was integral to the establishment and development of the RCC, it is still not safe for some to be open about their sexuality. Although some of the women I interviewed are out and spoke very directly and frankly about their sexual orientation and their experiences, not all of these women are out to the community, to their families or to the public. In the interests of maintaining the most ethical treatment of all participants, I have chosen to keep all participants anonymous in the section in Chapter Five where I consider the contributions of lesbians more closely. I regret that I cannot attribute the contributions of this section and name each woman who shared her feelings with me.

Another dilemma with this section of my thesis is that as a heterosexual woman, I am not a member of the group I am writing about. I cannot profess to identify with, nor fully understand, the experiences of lesbian women in the women's movement in general or in the RCC in particular. However, I do believe that lesbian involvement is a crucial component of the herstory of the RCC, just as it is an integral part of the feminist

movement as a whole.

I have decided to only write about the volunteers I have interviewed, and about Diane Duggan. Although I found other women's names among documents and participants volunteered information about other women, I did not feel it would be appropriate to write about their involvement without speaking to them or obtaining their consent. I do refer to other women involved in cases where the information is gathered from a published source. I did try to contact all the women whose names I found in the minutes and logbooks of the NSWC as members of the RCC. If they are not included, it is because I could not contact them, they did not respond to messages from me or they declined to be interviewed. To the extent that this happened, it is unfortunate, as part of my intent was to acknowledge the work of women in this community.

For the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre

The Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre was made aware of my intention to pursue this topic as part of my Master's degree early in the process. I discussed the project briefly with Michelle Smith, who was the co-ordinator at the time. She informed me that I might face some difficulty in finding documents and women to interview, but was also helpful in offering names of women who might be interested in my study. The University Research Ethics Committee suggested the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre be involved at the level of contacting former volunteers. I offered this to the members of the Centre, but

they declined, citing that they were already heavily burdened with work and that since they were not involved in the research, they might be seen as promoting the project or having some input into it, which was not the case. This document then has been researched and compiled completely independently of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre. I do hope however that the Centre benefits from my research. I have also offered to give the Centre access to any files or documents I uncover in my search and to present information to them when the research is finished.

Limitations of the Research

Due to limitations of time and resources, this endeavour is necessarily limited in its focus. Like any research that relies on informants to come forward and give their perspective, this project reflects the experiences of the nine women I interviewed, all of whom were white and lived in St. John's, Newfoundland in the 1970s and 1980s. I wanted to interview women who volunteered at the RCC or handled the crisis line. This immediately ruled out women who went to the RCC with the intention of volunteering but left either during training or before "volunteering," which also happened. There seems to be consensus that there was some sort of "screening," which likely resulted in women being turned away from the Centre. There are others in the community who may have had a lot to say about working with the RCC who did not actually "volunteer," as was the case with one woman who called me and spoke with me over the phone about the RCC. Her contributions are not included in this document, despite the fact that she did have

experience with the RCC. Volunteers who had negative experiences at the RCC might have chosen not to come forward with their stories. The women who actually used the crisis line or other RCC services were not interviewed for this project. Giving the women who called the crisis line an opportunity to voice their experiences would provide another valuable dimension to study. The voices and opinions of all these people would be useful and relevant to any thorough and critical look at the RCC.

There are disagreements and conflicts about the RCC story and “what really happened.” In attempting to create a positive image of the Centre some of the participants might have omitted parts of what happened, or phrased their responses to reflect good intentions. Considering the time lapse, events might have been forgotten or blended together. The close relationship that existed between the Women’s Centre and the RCC might have cause confusion in the minds of participants who were not sure whether something had happened at the Women’s Centre or the RCC. Rather than test stories for accuracy, my purpose was to document the experiences of the women as they remembered and recreated them. I see my work as a “first step” in this process of documenting the herstory of the RCC. Hopefully another researcher will take on the task of filling in the gaps, or writing another version of the herstory by interviewing other volunteers, callers of the crisis line, or people in the community who had relationships with the RCC. This thesis can serve as a basis for other volunteers to compare their experiences.

Outline

Context for this project is provided by the second wave of the Canadian women's movement. I outline the theories that informed the movement, focusing especially on the radical feminist framework and the work done by radical feminists in the anti-rape campaign. In the latter part of Chapter Two I present research and writings about rape and sexual assault in the 1970s and 1980s. An outline of the laws concerning rape and legal reform will be given, as well as a brief look at the establishment of other Canadian rape crisis centres in the 1970s.

Chapter Three focuses on the St. John's Rape Crisis Centre and how it originated. Relying mainly on documents from the NSWC, I create a chronological account of the establishment of the RCC as a Committee of the NSWC in the 1970s. I examine the changing relationship between these two bodies as the RCC moved towards becoming an autonomous organisation that continued to work within the walls of the Women's Centre. I consider the relationship that existed between the two groups as characterised by periods of co-operation interspersed with others of relative independence. Using the feminist theories described in Chapter Two, I will explore whether and how the women of St. John's and their actions and explanations exemplify these frameworks.

After 1980, the RCC became more independent of the Women's Centre. The data on the actual sequence of events is partial and incomplete, therefore the subsequent chapter, Chapter Four, is organised thematically, outlining the philosophies and activities of the RCC. Despite association with a radical feminist framework, I will explore how the

activities of the RCC were sometimes in opposition to what is generally accepted as “radical” and how the RCC negotiated its identity to survive in a conservative community. I look at the issue of leadership in the RCC and the positions of volunteers within the group.

Chapter Five delves into the volunteers’ experiences as rape crisis volunteers. Using quotations from my interviewees, I present the women’s feelings and thoughts about the RCC, including tensions about when and whether to stop volunteering. I will also explore what feminism meant to the volunteers. The thesis concludes with my reflections on the process of doing this type of research and my recommendations for further research.

Before turning to the story of the RCC, it is important to understand the context in which the organisation was established. In the next chapter I identify some of the key theories about rape and the theorists who wrote about it in the 1970s and early 1980s. I examine what was happening on the national scene that led into the establishment of women-run rape crisis centres across Canada.

CHAPTER TWO:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I describe the activities and characteristics of the women's movement in Canada. Within the wider context of the women's movement, anti-rape efforts are generally associated with radical feminist groups so I focus mainly on this strain of feminism. I examine the legal reform that changed the crime of rape to one of sexual assault as well as the lobbying of feminist groups that preceded the change. Finally, I look briefly at the role of the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC) and the formative years that set the stage for the establishment of Canadian rape crisis centres.

The Second Wave of the Women's Movement in Canada

The second wave of the Canadian women's movement occurred from the late 1960s to mid-1980s.¹ Many women's groups were formed during that period, and although similarities existed among groups, each group worked from its own theories and ideas about how to best deal with issues affecting women. Writers on the movement generally categorise groups, using different feminist theories as a basis for distinction.

However, as groups often adhered to tenets of more than one different theory and involved women from different feminist perspectives, use of labels presented a false sense

¹Three different struggles need to be acknowledged: that of English-Canadian women, Francophone women in Quebec, and First Nations women. As background for this work, I will focus on the English-Canadian women's struggle.

of separateness and discontinuity between groups. The categories of “liberal,” “radical” and “socialist” feminism were most commonly used in describing organisations of the 1970s.² These categories of feminism are not exclusive and distinct. In each instance of use the labels need to be defined as their meanings change within groups over time, between groups and internationally. Writers on the Canadian women’s movement, however, generally accept the usefulness of these categories. Jeri D. Wine and Janice L. Ristock are editors of textbooks who employ these terms to represent and describe different feminist viewpoints, as do Nancy Adamson, Linda Briskin and Margaret McPhail, lending credibility to the use of such labels.

In Canada in the 1970s, the mainstream, public face of feminism was a liberal one. Its premise was that “female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints blocking women’s entrance to and success in the so-called public world” (Tong 2). The goal was equal opportunity. Liberal feminists fought for a legal and political system that treated women and men equally and an educational system that gave women equal access to jobs. Given a level playing field, liberal feminists believed that women would be just as successful as their male counterparts.

²Although these terms are commonly used to describe groups of the 1970s, there were other schools of feminist thought and feminist theory that have developed immensely over the past three decades. I am not suggesting that these constitute the whole of feminist theory. For a more thorough look at feminist theory, see Rosemarie Putnam Tong, Feminist Thought, 2nd ed. (Colorado: Westview Press, 1998).

Search for and reliance on government funding by liberal feminist organisations demonstrated willingness to communicate and work with the state. Largely reformist and transformative in nature, the movement did not call for an upheaval of the system but focused on the state as the primary instrument of change. Transformation of society was to take place through creation of a counter-culture or through changes in individual consciousness. The movement was centralised at the federal government level as the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW), written in 1970, became the movement's focal document. This document was the product of a federal Royal Commission, the recommendations of which fell primarily within federal jurisdiction (see Begin 21-38). The state legitimisation of women's issues, through the RCSW, made some women's immediate problems and crises visible, and subsequent funding allowed for the development of a network of alternative feminist services at the community level. It was not long after the RCSW Report that women saw the need, and had government funding, to organize around single issues. New groups were formed to address issues such as sex stereotyping in the media, unequal property laws and lack of adequate day-care.

Socialist feminists agreed with Marxist theory that capitalism was a source of women's oppression. Socialist feminists sought to explain how capitalism interacted with patriarchy in ways that were oppressive to women more than men thus overcoming what they saw as limitations of a gender-blind Marxist analysis. For authors Adamson, Briskin and McPhail, socialist feminism provided the only adequate explanation for the relations of power in Canadian society and the basis for developing an analysis of the resistance to

change (97). Socialist feminism was about transformation of the unequal relations between men and women and the redistribution of economic power (98). In their activism, then, socialist feminists fought for the overthrow of capitalism, but asserted that it could not be destroyed unless patriarchy was also destroyed, and that people's material or economic relations could not change unless their ideologies were also changed (Tong 118).

The radical women's movement in English Canada started around 1967 (Vickers, Rankin and Appelle 41). Radical feminist theory maintains that oppression based on sex and the body is primary and all other oppressions stem from it. Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett, Shulamith Firestone and Germaine Greer took the position that sex oppression was fundamental and that all society's institutions were permeated by and perpetuated male dominance. According to Jill Vickers, Pauline Rankin and Christine Appelle, the influence of these ideas in Canada was threefold: they helped revitalise the existing traditions of liberal and left feminism, they mobilised young women with their emphasis on personal and sexual relationships, and they motivated young women to join groups often established by U.S. émigré feminists, resulting in the formation of many radical groups across the country (41).

Radical feminist groups were well known for their work in establishing alternative services for women, as well as for organizing consciousness-raising groups. One of the most defining characteristics of radical feminism was its rejection of the state. The patriarchal system, according to radical feminists, should not be reformed but uprooted, as

well as its social and cultural institutions. The issue of physical violence against women was seen as the ultimate example of men exercising power over women's bodies and it was an issue that affected all women. Compared to liberal feminists, Canadian women's groups that were fighting violence against women, were more critical of state institutions and their ability to work for women. This feminism showed similarities to the U.S. women's movement (see Echols). Known for their rejection of the state and assertion of the uniqueness of women's experiences, radical groups were often marginalised, even by other women, and criticised for their "too radical" notions. Linda Briskin, of the socialist perspective, criticised radical feminism for too great an emphasis on "disengagement," refusal to work with other groups in the community, and insistence on adherence to feminist goals of consensus-decision-making and egalitarian functioning (24-40).

Writing about the Second Wave

Writers interpret the women's movement according to their own experiences and beliefs. For example, in writing about rape reform, Barbara James reveals a radical feminist perspective in her cynicism about working with the state and by alluding to the unrealistic expectation that the legal system would alter the imbalance of power (71). Authors Adamson et al are informed by the socialist-feminist perspective (16). They acknowledge that their perspective necessarily influences their interpretation of events as well as their criticism. Editors Wine and Ristock assert that theirs is an "integrative" approach, a term borrowed from Angela Miles (4). This approach emphasises

commonalities among the aims of feminisms of differing political orientations, such as liberal, radical, and socialist. It is their belief that the accomplishments and directions of the then contemporary movement have been a result of coalesced efforts among feminists of different political strands.

Most writers of the Canadian women's movement in the 1970s focused most heavily on the liberal feminist movement. Less is written about other groups, particularly the radical feminist groups that existed at the same time. Books about the women's movement refer to radical feminism as a sideline, and always consider it in relation to the mainstream liberal movement. For example, Naomi Black in her essay on "The Second Wave," describes her subject as "those parts of the second wave movement which can be seen as influencing the treatment of women by Canadian society, and more specifically, by governments" (84). She adds only that it is important to remember that the vitality and importance of feminism was crucially dependent on the myriad of small groups that influenced both individuals and the larger society simply because they existed.

One of the challenges I faced in my research, then, was the lack of a detailed history of the development of the radical movement. Perhaps, as Briskin reminds us, the ongoing invisibility of the more radical vision of women's liberation, which would entail major social and economic transformation, illustrates the distance left to be travelled (34).

The Anti-Rape Movement

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the beginning of what is known as the anti-rape movement within the women's movement. The anti-rape movement in North America was characterised by two main goals: substantial revision or rewriting of rape laws and change in societal attitudes that reflected and reinforced laws and myths surrounding rape (Kasinsky 159). These goals were to be met while assisting rape victims in the short term and eliminating rape in the long term. Treatment of rape victims by the police and in the courts, often referred to as the "second rape," was also a major focus. American feminists slightly preceded their Canadian counterparts in taking up the fight for freedom from sexual violence but by the early 1970s, both Canadian and American feminists had developed networks with which they organised around such issues as abortion and labour laws. Consciousness-raising groups were formed where women talked about their personal experiences and discovered their common oppression as women. In the early 1970s American feminists organised the first workshops and "speak-outs" about women's oppression and experience of sexual assault (Kasinsky 159). These often featured testimony from rape victims.

A 1971 article written by Susan Griffin in the American Ramparts magazine was likely the first piece of writing that talked about how women, and rape victims in particular, felt about rape and challenged popular thinking at the time (cited in Clark and Lewis 24). Susan Brownmiller's Against Our Will, published in 1975, was very radical in its assertion that rape was simply the ultimate manifestation of men's power over women,

the extreme point on a continuum of violence against women and misogyny. In her essay, "The Rape Atrocity and the Boy Next Door" radical feminist theorist Andrea Dworkin echoed Brownmiller's ideas, defining rape as:

... the logical consequence of a system of definitions of what is normative. Rape is no excess, no aberration, no accident, no mistake – it embodies sexuality as the culture defines it. As long as these definitions remain intact – that is as long as men are defined as sexual aggressors and women are defined as passive receptors lacking integrity – men who are exemplars of the norm will rape women (46).

The concept that "normal" men raped and did so as a result of the violent and aggressive culture in which they grew up was new, as it was in contrast to the pervasive stereotype of a rapist as an abnormal male, a crazed sex lunatic who grabbed women off the street. Other theorists such as Ti-Grace Atkinson and Catherine MacKinnon analysed masculine violence as the major shaper of sexual and gender oppression (Weir 70).

The goals, philosophies and organisational format of the movement in Canada were similar to that of the United States, and from the beginning Canadian feminists were aware of the work of their American counterparts and used them as models for the work they took on north of the border. Seattle Rape Relief, for example, provided a useful model for Vancouver women to observe when they formed their own rape crisis centre (Kasinsky 160). Rape crisis centres in Canada were organised in direct response to the needs of Canadian communities, however, and not in response to the actions of American sisters (Kasinsky 160).

Until at least 1973, there was little research on rape conducted in Canada. Lorenne Clark, a professor at the Centre of Criminology in the University of Toronto and one of the founding organisers of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, was one of the earliest Canadian researchers to tackle the issue. Clark led a research project funded by the National Law Reform Commission to study the treatment and handling of rape offences and rape victims in Ontario courts in the early 1970s (Clark and Duncan 41, 44). The first phase of this research involved examination of transcripts of preliminary hearings for those victims whose cases went that far in the years 1970-1974. The second part was interviewing rape victims whose cases got to a preliminary hearing.

Clark, with Debra Lewis, published the first Canadian book on the subject of rape in 1977 titled Rape: The Price of Coercive Sexuality. In "Rape – Position Paper," prepared for the National Action Committee in 1977, Clark attempted to sum up what had been written, discussed, and proposed pertaining to rape in Canada up to that point (11-15). Clark wrote that although rape had always been considered a major offence, it had attracted very little attention from researchers, theorists or women activists. She credits this to the discrepancy between the stereotype of rape as an act of blood-lust violence, perpetrated by an abnormal male upon a virtuous female victim and the actual cases that came before the courts. If the general population believed that rape was the action of a mentally ill person, then it was not an issue for women's rights groups. As more and more cases came before the courts in which a "normal" man had raped a woman, it became commonplace to shift blame away from the perpetrator and onto the victim. The refusal to

attribute responsibility to the rapist strengthened, or was justified by, the “victim-precipitated” theory of rape which was prevalent in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Clark “Position Paper” 11; Amir 259-76). This theory outlined certain behaviours or characteristics of the female victim that “led” to the assault.

Clark noted that attention to, and reassessment of, rape cases and rape victims in the criminal justice system came about as a direct result of the Canadian women’s movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. More and more women focussed on the crime of rape, with the aim of presenting the experience and perspective of the victim – how women felt about rape, as opposed to the myth or stereotype – and forcing it out of a conspiracy of silence. Anti-rape groups banded together to talk about the sexual oppression of women. They quickly realised, however, that without legal reform, long-term change was impossible. Therefore another goal of these groups was to work for changes in the law. Many feminists argued that the crime of rape stemmed from a time when women were legal property of men. Raping a woman was being treated as a crime against another man’s property. Feminists would learn more about the legal system and the process rape victims had to endure to address the problems in this area.

In the early 1970s, the movement against rape in Canada began to unite around the concept and formation of rape crisis centres. By 1975, there was enough awareness and discussion of rape in Canada to support the first national conference of rape crisis centres (“Changes,” 23-24). In earlier stages of the movement, letter correspondence, exchanges of pamphlets and a few personal visits between centres had been the main source of

communication. Almost all centres developed around the framework of women providing a service to other women that was unavailable from traditional counselling or aid agencies. The national conference promoted further communication between centres and a national organisation, The National Association of Sexual Assault Centres, was formed ("Changes" 24). Three years later, there were twenty-five rape crisis centres in operation and a National Health and Welfare grant paid the salary of a National "Assister" or co-ordinator for the national organisation (Kasinsky 164).

Journal and magazine articles in the 1970s focused on telling the experiences of women who had been raped. Beyond the horror of the act, they reported the "secondary victimisation" of women who reported rape. Victims were ridiculed, dismissed and even scolded for their role in what happened to them by agencies such as the police force and criminal justice system. Few women got to court and even fewer saw the man who raped them convicted. Recognising the inadequacy of criminal law for protection of a woman's rights, Linda Duncan recommended civil court as an option for women to deal with their rape and receive some compensation for their victimisation (Duncan 28-30). In the same issue of the feminist periodical Branching Out, Jane Dick wrote an article about rape in Montreal titled, "Are We Paranoid?" (30-31). In the article, Dick talked about her experiences as she researched rape in Montreal. She met authorities that had contact with rape victims including doctors, lawyers and police officers. She found that many were aware of, but not concerned about, women's experiences of being assaulted and the treatment they received in the process of reporting an assault. The police officers she

interviewed were sarcastic and harassing. Asked about his "experience with rape," one officer joked that if she could find a "willing victim," he would "love to do the job" (Dick 31). Dick outlined the procedures a victim of rape had to go through, which were intimidating enough, but became much more complicated if she decided to press charges. The victim had to decide immediately whether or not to press charges, and if so, was admitted (*only* at the request of the police) to the Institut Medico-legal to be examined. Outside of this medical examination, the Institut was not equipped to deal with rape victims and Dick stated that the only resource for victims of rape in Montreal at this time was the Rape Crisis Centre.

Despite the work of feminist activists in the 1970s, myths continued to cloud the issue of rape. Some were perpetuated through "empirical research" and even through "anti-rape campaigns." One such campaign was run by the Crime Prevention Department of the Edmonton City Police in 1979, which was also taken up locally by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, called "Lady Beware" (Bliss 5-6). The campaign was based on the premise that women can avoid rape and outlined steps for women to take in order to do so, laying responsibility (and hence, blame) on women. A woman in St. John's protested the campaign and wrote a brief commentary outlining her concerns that the material reinforced the stereotype that women provoked attacks (RCC: Critical Comment). Evidently, efforts to provide realistic information to the public on rape varied from province to province. In co-operation with its police force, the provincial government of British Columbia developed an impressive and comprehensive rape

information program. An Ontario Provincial Police report was published around the same time, however, which concluded that a majority of rape offences involved victims who were “indiscreet,” “promiscuous” or both (Chase “Ontario Provincial Police Report,” 74-75).

The 1970s saw an upsurge in research and writing about rape on both the American and Canadian national agendas. Since it was the first time rape was discussed publicly, audiences were curious and interested in what rape victims had to say and theories about why rape happened. The myths and stereotypes about rape continued to be influential legally however, as more and more rape victims saw their cases dismissed as “unfounded” when they did not fit the stereotype of a legitimate rape victim and their stories did not portray what was erroneously thought to be a “typical” rape scenario. If the woman had been drinking, had accepted a social invitation from the man, had any sort of relationship with him prior to the assault – these and other circumstances would prevent a conviction. The police might have believed the woman was raped, but with knowledge that a conviction was unlikely, refused to proceed with the case. The laws pertaining to rape were problematic and much energy and time was invested in trying to change how the legal system dealt with it.

The 1980s saw rape being taken up by researchers other than feminists and criminologists. The view of rape as being precipitated by some uncontrollable natural sexual urge of men was further challenged. More and more women reported being raped by an acquaintance or a boyfriend. As it generally became recognised that the rapist could

be the boy next door, or someone known to the victim, new theories were put forth about why men raped women. Numerous books sought to explain the phenomenon and the feminist theory of rape was one considered among others such as social learning and evolutionary theory. The social learning theory of rape basically portrayed rape as part of aggressive behaviour towards women learned by a combination of being exposed to, imitating and believing various rape myths and scenarios (Ellis 12). Like the feminist view of rape, social learning theory saw cultural and social learning as largely responsible for rape. Feminist theory, however, focused on socio-economic and political exploitation of women as the underlying cause while social learning theory saw cultural tradition as more directly linked with interpersonal aggression and sexuality and therefore responsible for sexual assault (Ellis 13). The evolutionary, or sociobiological, theory of rape proposed that aggressive sexual behaviour is an extreme genetic response to natural selection pressure on males to copulate and produce offspring (Ellis 15-16). This theory practically removed all responsibility from the rapist since the behaviour was considered "natural." Essays in books about rape described typical rape scenarios, demographic information on rapists and rape victims and statistics about the prevalence of rape (see Roberts; Tomaselli and Porter). The terms "date rape" and "rape trauma syndrome" entered the literature as research into the effects of rape on victims was carried out. Canadian Psychologist featured studies that examined attitudes toward rape and rape victims (see Sundburg and Barbaree 215; Addie 258; Ward 359).

The United States produced much more research and literature about rape in the 1980s than Canada. Americans started writing about their anti-rape movement as early as 1981 (Largen 46-52). More recent books by American authors, such as Nancy Matthews' 1994 book, Confronting Rape: the Feminist Anti-Rape Movement and the State and Maria Bevacqua's Rape on the Public Agenda: Feminism and the Politics of Sexual Assault, published in 2000, reflect on the movement and its place in later feminism. I could find no such extensive accounts in Canada. Feminist periodicals such as Broadside and Kinesis continued to run articles about rape, but many mainstream periodicals moved on to other topics. Newspapers only published reports about particular rape cases as they went through the courts. Very little about rape can be found from the 1980s in feminist scholarly journals such as Atlantis. A 1980s book on rape in Canada, or by a Canadian author is hard to find. Ruth Bray, a psychologist, published Sexual Assault in Canada in 1980 as part of the "Social Problems in Canada" series, but this resource used information and research from the 1970s. The laws surrounding rape changed in 1983, with the abolition of the crime of rape and the introduction of the crime of sexual assault. Some researchers and feminists might have believed this to be an endpoint to the prior work on rape, accounting for the seeming decrease in relevant literature.

Rape: The Law and Legal Reform

The laws surrounding the crime of rape have changed considerably over the past three decades, including abolition of the term "rape" in the Criminal Code of Canada. The

first Criminal Code was developed in 1892, with no amendments made to the section pertaining to rape for more than eighty years. Amendments were made in 1975 regarding the admission of evidence related to the victim's previous sexual behaviour. Major changes were introduced in 1983 when the Criminal Code was changed to include the charge of sexual assault. The tenet that rape should be seen as an assault – an act of violence, not sex – had been the focus of many feminists and anti-rape groups in their push for a new law. Many rape crisis centres and the federally funded Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, which was an important outcome of the Royal Commission, had recommended that rape be replaced in the Criminal Code by a crime of assault in varying degrees.

In 1976, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women published the "Person Papers" which were intended to "bring some of the issues where inequality is still rampant to as wide a readership as possible" (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women 1). Rape, according to the CACSW, was the least-reported and least-punished offence in Canada (4). Regarding Rape, one of the Person Papers, outlined the laws pertaining to rape and offered explanations as to why they were ineffective. The law, prior to the changes in 1983, made it very difficult, if not impossible, for lawyers to prosecute a rapist. The onus of proof of non-consent was on the victim; the defendant did not have to prove anything. According to Statistics Canada, 1230 rapes were reported in Canada in 1971. Only 148 of these cases went to court and only 73 of the defendants were convicted (Canadian Advisory Council 9). So, 6% of *reported* rapes resulted in a trial and

conviction. This statistic is remarkable in itself, however when one takes into account that it is estimated that reported rapes account for as little as ten percent of all committed rapes, the number of convictions for rape becomes negligible.

The Advisory Council asserted that there were three main reasons for the high rate of acquittals in rape cases: these revolved around the concepts of consent, character and corroboration. The issue of whether or not the woman consented was often the only issue being debated. The fact that some sexual activity took place was not usually in contention, but whether the alleged victim was a willing participant. At this time the legal interpretation of rape allowed consent to be inferred from "lack of resistance." The victim would have to show how she quite clearly and unequivocally communicated her lack of consent. The victim's character or morals were also on trial. The victim was questioned about her private life in an attempt to establish an evaluation of the woman's sexual morals. Women who were not of "previously chaste character" could not be raped, as they were considered likely to be willing participants if they had engaged in any sort of sexual activity with any other person in their lives. Unlike other criminal trials where the evidence of a single, competent witness was sufficient, in rape trials the judge was required to warn the jury that to convict the defendant without corroboration was dangerous. The search for corroborating evidence or witnesses could easily be the breakdown of a rape case.

The Advisory Council recommended that there were basic concepts that needed to be examined and changed: definitions of rape and sexual offences, rape trial procedures

and publicity. Distinctions needed to be made according to type and degree of offence. The Council called for abolition of the term “rape” with all the negative connotations it carried for its victims, believing that renaming the crime as an assault would emphasise the violent, rather than sexual, nature of the act and it would therefore be taken more seriously. The authors of Regarding Rape described the laws as outdated and reflective of ancient views of women and their roles in society. They also pointed out that myths surrounding rape, such as the victim playing a role in provoking the attack or the belief that rape occurred because men could not control sexual urges, clouded the issue and worked to excuse and tolerate such behaviour.

The Law Reform Commission of Canada

In June 1978, The Law Reform Commission of Canada published Working Paper 22 which was titled Criminal Law: Sexual Offences. “Working Papers” were published for the purpose of soliciting public comment to assist a Commission in the formulation of final recommendations on a subject. In this paper, the Law Reform Commission proposed more concise formulations of sexual offences. The Commission hoped to adapt the law to modern Canadian society, to bring the law more in line with present-day values and attitudes toward sexual behaviour and sexual offences. The Commission also wanted to examine the role of the law in relation to sexual conduct which would include a re-evaluation of some of the previous offences to emphasise lack of consent as the determining factor and not the sexual act itself (Law Reform Commission xi).

Analysis of sexual offences by the Law Reform Commission was based on three policy guidelines: protecting the integrity of the person, protecting children and special groups and safeguarding public decency (Law Reform Commission 5). Under the Criminal Code at the time, rape was part of Section IV: "Sexual Offences, Public Morals and Disorderly Conduct." This grouping included other crimes such as "seduction under promise to marry," "buggery or bestiality," "immoral theatrical performance," and "trespassing at night" (Law Reform Commission 54). The actual crime of rape was defined as follows: "male person commits rape when he has sexual intercourse with a female person who is not his wife, (a) without her consent, or (b) with her consent if the consent is extorted by threats or fear of bodily harm, is obtained by personating her husband, or is obtained by false and fraudulent representations as to the nature and quality of the act" (Law Reform Commission 55). The Commission agreed with feminist groups that the term "rape" should be abolished, since the word evoked such strong emotional reactions and the stigma that accompanied rape negatively affected the victim. Also, the term "rape" referred specifically and exclusively to forced intercourse, so changing the crime to include varying levels of assault would render other forced sexual behaviours (such as touching or kissing) as against the law and unacceptable.

The Commission did not come to any clear consensus concerning rape within marriage. They proposed to consider the issue in the case of couples who were separated rather than those living under the same roof. They asked for feedback and input from concerned groups about this issue.

The Change from Rape to Sexual Assault

The major change in the Criminal Code which saw the abolition of the term rape and introduction of levels of sexual assault, came into effect 4 January 1983 (Chase, "Analysis," 53-54). The crime of indecent assault was also removed. The new law included three levels of sexual assault: sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, and sexual assault with a weapon or threat to a third party. The Code was also revised to allow spouses to be tried for rape regardless of whether they were separated. Other changes that were beneficial for a rape victim included removal of the "requirement of recent complaint" which demanded that a victim come forth to press charges at the "first reasonable" opportunity. Also, consent could *not* be inferred from lack of resistance on the part of the victim.

There were concerns and challenges to some aspects of the new laws, including the acceptable use of the argument by the accused that the victim looked or appeared to be the age of legal consent (over sixteen). Also, the notion that "consent" could be used as a defence in cases where the victim was under fourteen and the accused less than three years older than her was challenged.³

Generally, the changes were considered progressive and in line with what feminists and anti-violence organisers had demanded. Many "rape" crisis centres gradually changed

³This law permitted heterosexual sex between partners under 18, even if one of them was under 14. Homosexual sex, however, would be considered "gross indecency" between partners who were under 21.

their names to reflect the changes in the Criminal Code and feminists adopted the new language with which to describe this experience of violence. Although the changes, in general, were heralded as a victory, there was some concern about the sanitization of the crime of rape by use of the less emotionally-laden term, sexual assault. Rape was a horrific and specific term that struck fear and horror into the hearts of men and women alike. Could "sexual assault" accurately portray the devastating experiences of victims? Theorists, such as Catherine MacKinnon, argued against the "violence, not sex" slogan, saying that women who took up that argument were afraid of being criticised for being against sex. MacKinnon went on to postulate that all violence perpetrated against women is necessarily sexual, in a society where we are taught that we exist for men (90).⁴ There were feminist and activist groups who protested the change and continued to utilise the word rape to accurately describe the experience of sexual violence.

Canadian Rape Crisis Centres and the National Organisation

During the early 1970s Canadian and American feminists put considerable energy into the establishment of community-based, women-run rape crisis centres and phone lines. Rape crisis centres sprung up around North America with the dual purpose of providing support to rape victims and pressuring governmental and other public agencies

⁴This is taken from a talk at Stanford University, Stanford, California, 16 November 1981 where several hundred students gathered to protest a series of rapes reported on campus.

for changes that would lessen the negative impact of reporting the offence on the victim. According to Michelle Wasserman, the first rape crisis line for receiving emergency calls from rape victims was opened in Washington, DC in July 1972 (cited in Kasinsky 159). By the mid-1970s the anti-rape movement in the States had progressed into a social movement with high priority on the national agenda (Kasinsky 161). Telephone crisis lines and rape crisis centres could be accessed from nearly all major cities in the United States. These centres carried out the very important service to all women of providing support, information and advocacy for women's rights (Fitzgerald, Wolfe and Guberman 68).

Joanie Vance, the first National Co-ordinator of Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC, originally known as the National Association), believed that RCCs were a logical development in the progress of the women's movement (133-40). The consciousness-raising groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s began the process of discovery and articulation of the common experiences of women. Groups moved from learning about the problems that women faced due to their common oppression, to devising solutions. Vance argued that this organising was a crucial step in the development of a feminist consciousness as it highlighted the pervasiveness of the common oppressions of women and its manifestations (134).

Once RCCs were established and working to provide services to victims, the focus turned to remaining operational. Nearly all these centres were completely run by volunteers who were soon exhausted by the sheer amount of work they had taken on to

meet their objectives. Some centres applied for and received government funding to hire staff or to purchase necessary equipment or space. Other centres subscribed to the belief that the work should be a service for women, offered by women, and not connected to state services at all. The dilemma of whether or not to seek funding rested in the possibility that once government funding was received the organisation would have to be accountable to that funding body. Funding was seen as a possible means of control and co-optation. To secure funding, then, would RCCs have to censor or even change their long-term goals?

For some organisations, mere existence was dependent upon funding from government, which in the 1970s mainly consisted of short-term, project-oriented grants. If funding was secured, operating under these grants would still require volunteer work and not allow for work towards long-term plans and goals. Time and energy was spent applying for as many grants as possible and accounting for the money spent. Lack of funding, whether it was the result of a conscious effort on the part of the group to not apply for government funding or failure to secure funding, meant centres were not always fully operational or in a position to offer extensive services. Attempts to secure funding may have been unsuccessful due to the criticism of state-funded social services by RCCs. The long-term goal of most RCCs was to fundamentally change society's structure. One would wonder what a government had to gain by supporting action for radical change.

Loranne Clark believed that the impact of rape and the subsequent turmoil associated with reporting it had been considerably lessened by the establishment of rape

crisis centres ("Position Paper" 13). By 1977 there were 25 such centres operating in Canada, all of which had come into existence since 1973. None had secured stable funding and almost all were surviving solely on volunteer work. In her report to the National Action Committee, Clark wrote that the work was highly skilled and demanding:

In addition to dealing with the many problems that rape victims encounter whether or not they enter the criminal justice process, they must also provide paralegal assistance and public education. Despite this, funding is non-systematic, sporadic, and time-consuming since it must be sought from three levels of government, municipal, provincial and federal ("Position Paper" 13).

Clark went on to say that even with legal reform, RCCs were performing a function not being offered elsewhere and so should be given stable funding to carry on. She recommended that all RCCs be funded federally, so as to minimise the conflict of interest that would come from municipal and provincial involvement. Such conflict might result from pressure from the funding body on the RCC to encourage victims to report to proper authorities or to report statistics that are favourable to that city or province.

Joanie Vance described the work of rape crisis centres as "necessarily feminist" since the analysis of the assault was that it was a manifestation of societal attitudes, rather than an isolated incident to which the victim had personally contributed (136). Most centres worked under the premise that rape was the extreme form of women's oppression in a patriarchal and sexist society and recognised that this problem would not be solved without legal reform. So, although RCCs organised to ease the plight of the victim, it was acknowledged that this "service to victim" aspect would not effect fundamental change.

The long-term goal would be to bring about a system that would not victimise women again in the courts. Clark wrote that the assumption was that RCCs would last only until such measures were in place, at which point they would become redundant ("Position Paper" 15).

At the first national conference in 1975, an umbrella organisation was formed to outline objectives and ensure competent research into rape ("Changes," 23-24). The National Association of Rape Crisis Centres, which later became known as the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC), still exists today and acts for RCCs in Canada. Individual centres that joined the national organisation took on the philosophies outlined in the CASAC constitution and decided on which particular aspects they would focus their energies. How a centre worked with official agencies, such as the police, varied, with some refusing to support any of the traditional organisations to which women might turn for help. Krin Zook of Vancouver Rape Relief wrote that supporting these agencies institutionalised rape "as an accepted social reality. (It) is only adjusting, not facilitating value changes" (27). Other centres decided to work with the agencies in hopes of changing pervasive attitudes.

CASAC organised and managed a national newsletter that connected centres across the country, allowing communication back and forth about what each group was doing and the struggles they were facing. British Columbia and Ontario were particularly vocal within CASAC in the 1970s and early 1980s. Both provinces managed early on, not only to establish several rape crisis centres, but also to form provincial coalitions that

connected the centres. Funding could be applied for by the coalition, which would likely have more power than an individual centre. A large portion of the newsletters published by CASAC included entries and updates from Vancouver Rape Relief and Toronto and Ottawa Rape Crisis Centres, in particular. Information was shared in the newsletter and made available for other centres to utilise. Debates about philosophies and activities were also prevalent. Vancouver Rape Relief (VRR) found itself amidst controversy when some of the community asserted that its tactics were too radical. Members of VRR encouraged victims of rape to physically confront rapists at home or at work. Other methods employed by the organisation to bring attention to the problem of rape were seen, by both the general public and some members of the women's community, as too radical. A meeting of the women's community resulted in the creation of a new group called Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) which was less radical. The Toronto Rape Crisis Centre appeared to progress more smoothly and by 1983, its members had established caucuses to understand differences within the organisation, including a lesbian and a working class caucus.

Conclusion

The second wave of the Canadian women's movement brought about real changes in society's view of rape and in the services available for victims of rape. Not only did feminists bring to light the prevalence of the problem of rape, they also exposed and protested the secondary victimisation of women at the hands of professionals who were

supposed to help them. Literature about rape in the 1970s was abundant as society grappled with the idea that “normal” men raped women and that women were often raped by men they knew. The national context was set for the establishment of women-run rape crisis centres that would advocate for victims while educating the general public about the problem of rape. Many of the anti-rape centres that started in the 1970s continued to work into the 1980s. Crisis lines were common to most of these centres, as was the effort to provide advocacy for victims of rape. CASAC continued to be a connector for RCCs with national annual conferences and regular newsletter publications. Changes in the Criminal Code in the early 1980s seemed to mark an endpoint to the Canadian literature as writings about rape began to wane in the 1980s. Psychologists and other health professionals theorised about rape and its harmful mental effects on victims, but the mainstream media largely abandoned the topic. As the law changed to reflect societal attitudes, perhaps many became complacent believing that the law now would take care of the problem.

In 1975, twenty-five rape crisis centres existed in Canada. In Newfoundland and Labrador the women’s movement was already in full force. In the next chapter I outline the provincial and local context for the establishment of the St. John’s RCC. The founders of rape crisis centres (RCCs) were generally considered to belong to the radical feminist branch of the women’s movement. Using the theories outlined in this chapter, I consider whether the RCC fit the “radical feminist” label that was used for most rape crisis centres. My findings were not totally congruent with literature about the women’s movement. The

RCC certainly fits the radical feminist framework in its focus on men's violence against women and its goal to set up alternative services for women. However, a closer look at the activities of the Centre and the philosophies of the individual members reveal that the RCC was not simply a "radical feminist organisation" as one might suppose based on the literature.

In the next chapter, I first describe the history of the Newfoundland Status of Women Council, from which the RCC emerged in the late 1970s. The establishment of a Women's Centre had been in the forefront for the NSWC and committees had been set up to take on particular issues. Rape, or violence against women, however was not an issue taken on by the NSWC until 1977 when Diane Duggan, a member of the NSWC, advanced the rape crisis cause and organised a committee that later became the Rape Crisis Centre. I follow the development of the RCC up to 1980, when the RCC declared its independence of the NSWC. The ensuing relationship between the NSWC and the RCC throughout the 1980s is analysed as the two organisations were intimately connected in their development.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ST. JOHN'S RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

In this chapter I attempt to piece together how the St. John's RCC was first conceptualised and established in the late 1970s. Since the RCC began as a committee of the Newfoundland Status of Women Council, I outline the origins of the Council which began in response to the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW). I describe some of the tensions that developed between the NSWC and the RCC, as the RCC declared its autonomy from the NSWC. I examine the changing relationship between the RCC and the NSWC over the decade in which the RCC was housed in the Women's Centre but operated fairly independently. The main sources of information for this chapter are the minutes and logbooks kept by the NSWC.¹

Newfoundland Status of Women Council: 1972-76

In 1967, the government set up a Royal Commission to investigate the status of women in Canada. As outlined in the previous chapter, this was preceded by many women's groups and lobbyists pushing for changes that would enable women to have the same rights and opportunities as men. The Commission toured Canada, visiting community halls and centres to hear the concerns of various interest groups. A total of six briefs were presented to the Royal Commission from women's groups and individuals in

¹See Appendix 6 for a chronological list of important dates in the history of the RCC.

Newfoundland (Pope and Burnham 1967).² The three groups that appeared before the Commission were the St. John's chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Association of Registered Nurses, and the Newfoundland Home Economics Association. The individuals that presented to the Commission were Dorothy Wyatt, Ella Manuel and Doris Janes. All the briefs addressed problems associated with women and work; most identified examples of how women, particularly married women, were being discriminated against. When the RCSW published its findings in 1970 it made 167 recommendations for the improvement of conditions for women. These recommendations focused on the legal and economic barriers that prevented women from achieving equal status with men in Canadian society. Canadian women's groups that had been active in the fight for equality considered the RCSW a breakthrough. It was an acknowledgment of the structural, legal and economic barriers that kept women financially dependent and unable to "succeed" as men had. Naming and documenting the barriers made them tangible, gave credibility to women who were fighting for equality and paved the way towards bringing those barriers down.

Many women's groups across Canada formed in response to the findings of the Commission. The federal Status of Women Canada government department, and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women were set up to ensure that the

²See Sharon Gray Pope and Jane Burnham's chapter in Pursuing Equality for a broader view and more thorough description of the women's movement in Newfoundland and Labrador in the 1970s and 1980s.

government followed through on the recommendations. On a smaller scale, women came together in consciousness-raising groups to increase awareness of the issues and also to formulate their role in women's push for equality. In Newfoundland and Labrador, like other provinces across the country, local women's groups formed to put pressure on their provincial and municipal governments to work towards women's equality. The Newfoundland Status of Women Council was one such group. Organised on 16 November 1972 as a non-profit organisation, the NSWC wanted to "help ensure that the recommendations [of the Royal Commission] were carried out" ("The Goal Remains Constant" 18A).

There were three specific events that led up to the formation of the NSWC. The first was a "Strategy for Change" Conference held in Toronto in April 1972. The participants in this meeting were concerned specifically with the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Five women attended from Newfoundland, including Iris Kirby from the Secretary of State Office and Shirley Goundrey from the YWCA Action Committee (Pope and Burnham 170). In St. John's, a month later, a seminar sponsored by the St. John's Business and Professional Women's Club featured one of the Commissioners of the Report, Judge Doris Ogilvie. Approximately 200 women attended and a meeting followed at which ten women were nominated and elected to "take some ongoing action to ensure that the enthusiastic response at this seminar did not dissipate" (Rape Crisis Centre: "Resume" 2). This group of women became the NSWC. Minutes of the Status of Women Council show that they met as early as May of that year

and a constitution was introduced, revised and accepted by September (NSWC: Minutes, 18 September 1972). The third event was a visit from radical feminist Bonnie Kreps, an activist who was instrumental in the establishment of a women's centre in Toronto (NSWC: Minutes, 13 June 1972). She held a public meeting while in St. John's and made several media appearances, thereby introducing the women's movement to a larger audience. Several consciousness-raising groups formed as a result of her visit.

As stated in earlier chapters, the liberal wave was the public face of feminism in the 1970s and the report of the RCSW put the concerns of liberal feminists to the forefront. The document itself was "liberal" in its goals and recommendations. Nowhere in the federally funded document was the issue of violence against women addressed. This is probably an accurate reflection of the issues brought forth by the women's groups and concerned citizens that participated in the consultation. Violence against women, rape and wife battering were not on their immediate agenda. Whether there was awareness of these issues with reluctance to bring them forward is not known. Day-care accessibility, equal opportunity for employment, women serving on juries, and political representation are examples of issues that were considered pressing at the time. As stated earlier, the NSWC was one of the groups that organised in response to the RCSW. As the group's focus was the implementation of the recommendations of the RCSW, it too was liberal in its mandates and goals. The NSWC set up "ginger groups" to deal with specific areas of concern raised in the RCSW (Pope and Burnham 1972).

In September 1972, the NSW Council received a \$500.00 seed grant from the Secretary of State's newly formed Women's Programme. In February 1973, a \$3000.00 grant was received from the same office to set up a women's centre in St. John's. The money was turned over to the Women's Place Collective, a group the NSW Council had collaborated with previously to produce a newsletter (Pope and Burnham 172). The collective was given autonomy to open and run the centre, which was called The Women's Place.³ The centre was set up at 144 Duckworth Street and later moved to Water Street in downtown St. John's (Pope and Burnham 172). While both the NSW Council and the collective used the centre, the groups had different goals and approaches in their fight for women's rights. Tensions arose and discussions ensued regarding the relationship and the differences between the NSW Council and The Women's Collective. Eventually the NSW Council decided to find its own quarters (NSWC: "Letter to members").

NSWC opened its own Women's Centre at 77 Bond Street in 1974 which operated as a drop-in centre where women could come to collect information, seek help if necessary or to meet other women. The work continued to be liberal in its goals and approaches. The issues addressed included women on jury duty, representation in government, equal pay for women, discriminatory language in government documents and media, education and day-care. Sexual violence was not a prominent issue and was barely

³Wendy Williams remembered that the members of this collective also assisted rape victims (Williams 8). She added that as far as she was aware, the members of the Women's Place collective welcomed women into their homes, considering this the best way to assist them. Wendy characterised the group as more radical than the NSW Council.

mentioned in the minutes of the monthly meetings of the Council of the early 1970s. However, the topic was not completely ignored. In the mid-1970s “a panel around the theme of violence, especially as it affects women” was organised by the NSWC (NSWC: Minutes, 31 July 1974). This panel included discussions of rape, assault, and wife beating with invited speakers from Family Court, Criminal Investigation Department of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Social Welfare and psychologists (NSWC: Minutes, 5 August 1974). One aspect of the criminal justice system the organisation protested was the process of the court trial in rape cases. The NSWC sent out a press release suggesting questions that women voters could put to candidates in an upcoming election. The one question that reflected concern about sexual violence was, “When will we see rape cases in camera?” i.e., a closed courtroom to protect the victim (NSWC: “Press Release,” 1974). Mentions of rape and sexual violence in the minutes and logbooks were rare, however, and the above two references are the only ones found in the minutes from 1972 to 1974. In fact, in the minutes of 28 May 1975 there is reference to an article that had labelled the organisation as “anti-rape.” The members felt a “need to clarify ... that we are *not* trying to organise ourselves as a rape crisis centre” (italics added) (NSWC: Minutes, 28 May 1975).

Given that the NSWC was formed to advance the recommendations of the RCSW, which completely ignored the issue of violence against women, it is not surprising that the issue was not a main priority. However it is noteworthy that the NSWC felt it was important to clarify that they were not an “anti-rape” organisation. Why was it important

to make that distinction? I speculated that the NSWC did not want to appear too radical, considering that violence against women was associated with the radical feminist movement, in a community that could be described as conservative. Perhaps the NSWC wished to avoid the topic to prevent association with “radical feminists” which might have been more risky in terms of gathering public support. Wendy Williams disagreed with this analysis. It was her contention that being involved with the Women’s Centre, or any part of the women’s movement, was considered radical then, whatever the issues being addressed (Williams, email communication 28 October 2001). It might have been that they did not want to publicise services that they indeed could not offer.

In a summary of the year’s activities in 1975, which was International Women’s Year, no mention is made of fighting sexual violence. Activities focused on educating women and lobbying for change in the areas of politics, education and work. Government sponsored a Local Initiatives project in 1975, which provided for nine part-time positions at the Women’s Centre (Pope and Burnham 175). This funding was used to set up a speaker’s bureau, produce newsletters and pamphlets and to offer various courses at the WC. Briefs presented to the government in 1976 and 1977 indicated the goals of the organisation: Women and The Law, Funding for Day-care, Matrimonial Property Rights, Women in Public Life, and Women and Employment (“Goal” 18A). Violence against women, although still not a high priority, was mentioned on an agenda in the late 1970s. A plan to begin research into “battered wives” was mentioned and discussion about setting up a transition house, a shelter for women leaving abusive relationships had also started.

The NSWC first put a proposal to the provincial government for funding for a Transition House in 1975, but it was turned down (Pope and Burnham 198).⁴

The next few years saw the women's movement establish new groups on the provincial grassroots level. The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established at arm's length from government, along with the Women's Policy Office within government, to advise on women's issues (Pope and Burnham 177). More women were elected to government or ran for seats in elections. At the grassroots level, women's groups sprang up around the province, to raise awareness of issues they faced and to meet local needs. Status of Women Councils began in different towns in Newfoundland and Labrador including Corner Brook, Grand Falls and Labrador City (Pope and Burnham 177-81). These Councils put pressure on the NSWC to change its name to reflect its actual membership and focus and it renamed itself as the St. John's Status of Women's Council in 1984.

The Establishment of the Rape Crisis Committee: 1977-78

Based on the minutes of the NSWC, the impetus to establish a rape crisis centre in St. John's stemmed from a 1977 visit by Joanie Vance, National Co-ordinator for the

⁴After five years of lobbying, the province announced support for Transition House in 1980. A second-stage housing project, Iris Kirby House, was started in St. John's in 1983. It soon became apparent that running both dwellings was too difficult. Transition House was moved into the Kirby House premises and adopted the name Iris Kirby House. The shelter was named in memory of Iris Kirby, formerly of Secretary of State, who had been instrumental in organising Status of Women Councils in the province.

National Association for Rape Crisis Centres. By this time, the NSWRC had established committees that dealt with specific issues. My interviews and review of documents show that it was an exciting time to be involved in the women's movement. The NSWRC Women's Centre was a hub of activity. After Joanie Vance's visit the members of NSWRC were still cautious about whether they could offer a rape crisis service or not.

Diane Duggan, an active member of the NSWRC, took on the issue of rape crisis from the beginning. The question of whether or not the Women's Centre could offer rape counselling was noted in the meeting on 4 April 1977 but not enough members were in attendance to reach a decision. Already much of the work of the NSWRC was being done on volunteer hours and members were not sure whether they could take on another project that would involve more commitment and time. A couple of interested members decided to pursue the possibility of offering some service to victims of rape. A meeting, separate from regular NSWRC meetings, was held for anyone interested in looking further into the possibility of setting up a rape crisis service. In the minutes of 2 May 1977 a member of the NSWRC talked about the "rape crisis meeting," which indicated that the first meeting concerning rape crisis occurred between 4 April and 2 May 1977.

Meetings started to be held regularly, with Diane Duggan and one other member of the NSWRC generally organising them. At these meetings, reports were given on the services already available in St. John's and possibly in the province. Information was gathered from the police and medical profession. Diane Duggan contacted police and said they were "quite positive though paternalistic" about the idea of a rape crisis centre in St.

John's (NSWC: Minutes, 18 May 1977). At a meeting in September 1977 Crown Prosecutor John McGrath was a guest speaker. He explained to interested members what happened in a courtroom during a rape trial (NSWC: Minutes, 19 September 1977). In the minutes it was noted what a rape crisis centre could offer, however it is not clear whose ideas these were.

The people attending the rape crisis meetings reported back to the NSWC meetings on the information gathered and any progress made in preparing to set up a rape crisis service. At a 25 May 1977 NSWC meeting it was noted that Diane was going to a National Rape Conference in Montreal and this was a deadline by which the group should decide what they were going to do about rape crisis and whether they could offer the service or not. Although there is no subsequent reference to a group decision to go ahead with a rape crisis service, a rape crisis committee was set up six months later. The NSWC was involved in many different activities at this point and committees continued to work within their areas. Members were often on several committees and interests and contributions overlapped, so that nearly everyone was involved to some extent with all the work being done. Despite the workload, new committees continued to be struck when new issues came to light.

At a 23 November 1977 meeting new committees were proposed, including "rape crisis," the co-ordinator of which was to be Diane Duggan.⁵ In December, the minutes

⁵Diane Duggan figures prominently in the history of the RCC, as she was instrumental in the establishment and running of the organisation. From the very

noted that rape crisis would put a listing in the phone book under the title "Rape Crisis Centre" but the number would be the same as for the Women's Centre, as they were not yet ready for a twenty-four hour crisis line. In the same month, Diane "got her first rape case" (NSWC: Minutes, 14 December 1977). Investigation of the daily log books kept at the Women's Centre showed that Diane spent a lot of time initiating and maintaining contact with the National Co-ordinator of Rape Crisis Centres and other Canadian rape crisis centres for the next several months. Mail constantly came in addressed to Diane from various anti-rape organisations in Canada. Meetings were held for those interested in rape crisis about once a month outside regular "Women's Centre" hours so they could avail of the Centre for their meetings.

All members of the NSWC did not share the same enthusiasm for the idea to set up rape crisis services. Energies and resources were being pulled in many different directions. Before the RCC Committee was established, the NSWC debated whether to approach the Secretary of State to request money for an all day workshop on municipal elections or rape crisis (NSWC: Minutes, 31 August 1977). A fairly extensive article published in the Evening Telegram did not mention it at all, showing indeed that "The Goal Remains

beginning, Diane Duggan initiated and led the work necessary to get the Rape Crisis Centre off the ground. As can be seen in the minutes and logbooks, her name began to be used interchangeably with "rape crisis." Requests for speakers on the subject and information were directed to Diane and reports from the "RCC" were from Diane. The issue of Diane "being" the RCC was problematic for some members of the NSWC and, it has been argued, for Diane herself. This issue will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter and in Chapter Five when I consider Diane's involvement more closely.

Constant" ("Goal" 18A). At the Annual General Meeting references were made to "attempts to set up a rape crisis centre" however it was not a significant part of the NSWC annual report (NSWC: Minutes, 14 November 1977) as the committee was just getting started.

For the year 1978, the rape crisis group was still technically a "committee" of the NSWC, even though the organisation was referred to as the "Rape Crisis Centre" by all involved. In 1978, interested members, especially Diane Duggan, began an investigation into the financial resources needed to provide a rape crisis service. Like other RCCs across Canada, the focus was on offering crisis counselling to rape victims through a crisis line. It was noted that an answering service would cost \$50.00 a month, and there were plans to request a phone from the Newfoundland Telephone company. Consultations were held with Joanie Vance to gather information about funding sources and some applications were made for funding. The Rape Crisis Centre applied for a Canada Works grant to fund some of their work, but it was rejected. The Atlantic Regional Representative of CASAC, Paula Wilson, met with Diane and interested members in January to go over proposals for financial contributions at the national level (NSWC: Minutes, 25 January 1978). The RCC approached St. John's City Council for funds in the spring and received \$1000.00 to pay for a 24-hour crisis line.

The RCC used the media to raise its profile in the city and to increase awareness of the problem of rape and the services the RCC could offer. Many radio interviews were noted in the logbooks. The NSWC had already established a history of writing responses

to articles that appeared in the media. When an article appeared in the Daily News from a St. John's reader titled, "How Women's Lib Promotes Rape," it was decided that Diane would write a response from the RCC while someone else would write a response from the NSWC (Raske 22). This indicated that the organisations recognised that one advantage of being viewed as separate was that they could put forth two voices rather than one. Coverage in the media led to community awareness of the RCC and its services, resulting in requests for public presentations. For example, Diane and another woman were asked to speak at the Janeway, a hospital for children, about child sexual abuse in the fall of 1978.

The RCC's relationship with other agencies was established early in its development. Representatives from both the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) had contact with Diane. The RCMP called the Women's Centre to inform Diane that the film, "How to Say No to a Rapist and Survive" was going to be shown in the community, though they were likely aware that she would protest the use of this film.⁶ The RNC enlisted the help of the RCC by calling the organisation to request a volunteer to come to police headquarters to speak with a victim of assault (NSWC: Minutes, 22 March 1978). The willingness of Diane to work with and

⁶There was widespread criticism of Fred Storaska's film due to its use of humour and its advice for women to "play along" with an attempted rape. The St. John's Centre protested publicly (See Lynn Murphy, "Rape Crisis Centre Objecting to Film Dealing with Rapists," Evening Telegram [St. John's] 4 February 1978: 4) and in fact CASAC included its rejection of the film in revisions to its constitution (CASAC).

talk to police at this stage indicates a split from what would be considered a “radical” stance. Criticism of police responses to victims of sexual violence had resulted in many radical groups, including other members of CASAC, refusing to work with the police force on any level. Even prior to the establishment of the RCC, however, Diane spoke to police about their thoughts on having a RCC in St. John’s, indicating interest, at least, in the viewpoints of the local police force.

The rape crisis “centre” was actually the back office of the Women’s Centre located at 83 Military Road. This tiny room was used to keep information, do paperwork and whatever else constituted rape crisis work at that point. Meetings were held after regular business hours, so the group could use the Women’s Centre main area. Early in 1978, finances and the small number of volunteers limited services offered by the RCC. Although there was no crisis line, Diane did speak to victims of assault when requested by police or when someone called or came to the Women’s Centre. The back office was used in the daytime to speak with women if they came by. The rape crisis line was hooked up mid-July 1978 with money that was donated from St. John’s municipal council. With the separate rape crisis line, and the financial support for it, there came a new sense of independence. In August, Diane wrote in the daily logbook that, “from now on the RCC mail will be handled separately (from the NSW). Whoever gets the mail should put it to one side unopened. There is also a logbook (specifically) for the RCC” (NSWC: Logbooks, 2 August 1978). The women involved in establishing the RCC organised the “first rape crisis training session” 9 October 1978 that was open to women who were not

necessarily involved in the NSWC. The training sessions used community resources and information from other rape crisis centres on their practices to show the volunteers how to take crisis calls and to outline how the RCC was going to operate. Thirteen women attended and became the first group of RCC volunteers.

The year 1978 was also a time of change for the NSWC itself. A decision was made to buy housing for the Women's Centre rather than continue renting. If the Council invested in property, it could rent out apartments to help pay for the mortgage. Twenty of the women involved lent money to the NSWC to pay a downpayment of \$2000.00 on a house at 83 Military Road. The official opening of the new building which housed the NSWC's Women's Centre happened on 25 June 1978 ("Women's Centre Opens" 2). On 26 June the caption beneath a picture of four of the members of the NSWC in the Evening Telegram read that some of the "facilities on the first floor office will be a rape crisis centre, an information and meeting place and a feminist library" (Women's Centre Opens" 2).⁷ Not everyone was excited about the projects and progress of the RCC. Some of the members of the NSWC thought it was taking up too much time and effort that needed to be directed elsewhere. At a "Day of Discussion" members noted that although these programs were needed "... they did not provide an overall focus or goal for the entire organisation to become involved in" (NSWC: Minutes, 27 May 1978).

⁷One of the women I interviewed said that there was a contract written up at the time of the purchase of 83 Military Road that guaranteed a place for the rape crisis centre at the Women's Centre for as long as it was in existence. I did not find any documents or references to this in the logbooks or minutes of the NSWC.

The Rape Crisis Centre: 1979

At the end of 1978, all committees submitted a report to the NSWC including rape crisis. Rape crisis was still considered an issue and a project of the NSWC at this time, and the two groups were closely connected. 1979 was a busy year for the RCC and for Diane Duggan in particular. With the new volunteers trained in 1978, there were enough people now to get the RCC up and running. The activities seemed to be concentrated on making the public aware of the RCC and operating the crisis line. The crisis line was the mainstay of the organisation and "shifts" were taken with a beeper that alerted the carrier when someone called the crisis line. Volunteers took this beeper for a period of a day or two days, often using the Women's Centre as a drop-off and pick-up place. The logbooks show that the back office of the Women's Centre on Military Road continued to be used for rape crisis work. The rape crisis volunteers relied on the Women's Centre phone line as a business phone. Regular meetings were held there in the evenings with a brief note from Diane in the logbooks saying that they had been there for a rape crisis meeting. There are many notes made in the NSWC logbooks about interviews for television and radio. Information-gathering from different agencies, including medical professions, police, and justice officials continued. There was a lot of correspondence with other rape crisis centres and the national organisation. The RCC officially joined the Association of Canadian Rape Crisis Centres that year and contributed to the drafting of the national constitution.

The first two entries by Diane Duggan in the NSW Council of Women's logbooks of 1979 revealed tensions forming between the RCC and the NSW Council of Women. On 4 January Diane showed obvious frustration at not being contacted about a message left for her at the Women's Centre and on 14 January she made what she hoped would be "the final request for people not to leave the back office unlocked" (NSWC: Logbooks, 14 January 1979). Notes in the logbooks from or about the RCC became rare and nothing about the RCC was mentioned in the NSW Council of Women minutes from January to September 1979. In September 1979 the minutes noted that "Rape Crisis Centre" was on the agenda but discussion was tabled until the woman who had volunteered to be a liaison between the RCC and NSW Council of Women, returned. The circumstances that necessitated a liaison between the groups are not documented. The minutes of 22 October showed that the RCC wanted to clarify the relationship between the RCC and the NSW Council of Women. At this point, NSW Council of Women referred to members of the RCC as "they" indicating that the organisation was viewed as at least somewhat separate from the NSW Council of Women or that there was less overlap in the work of the two groups. The specific issue of concern for the RCC was whether the members needed to bring decisions to the executive of NSW Council of Women for approval, as it would be postponing action in some cases. The RCC did not want to divorce from the NSW Council of Women but wanted to clarify what needed to be brought to Council. NSW Council of Women thought that day-to-day business did not need their approval but news releases, public announcements and requests for funding should be brought to their attention and any decisions that involved significant time, money, or personnel should be made by the NSW Council of Women Executive.

The issue of the relationship with the RCC came to the forefront and was the first order of business for the 5 November meeting. The RCC proposed that they were "affiliated but autonomous," meaning they would be self-governing but make monthly reports to NSWC (NSWC: Minutes, 5 November 1979). They proposed that they should not have to wait for approval from NSWC for press releases or funding requests. Extensive discussion ensued about the relationship and obligations of the organisations to each other. The members of NSWC agreed that the "rape crisis centre is neither a standing committee nor a project of the NSWC and that the two organisations are affiliated: the affiliation is by consent of both groups. Therefore the rape crisis centre is autonomous in its operation" (NSWC: Minutes, 5 November 1979). Guidelines were laid out about the operation of the organisations, as they still shared space. For example, the RCC should use its own letterhead and filing cabinets and Women's Centre personnel should not answer the rape crisis phone, as they had not been trained to deal specifically with rape crisis calls. This was put forward as a motion and passed during the meeting. This then, would seem to mark the recognition that the St. John's Rape Crisis Centre was an organisation in itself although it continued to work out of the Women's Centre, specifically the back office, for at least the next twelve years.⁸

⁸In the 1990s, the RCC left the Women's Centre and rented a separate physical office in St. John's. I am unaware of the circumstances that led to the decision to find new quarters. The issue was not investigated in my research as it focuses on the RCC up until 1990 only. However, the continuing relationship between the RCC and the Women's Centre is an issue that warrants further investigation.

The Relationship Between the RCC and the NSWC in the 1980s

The 1980s mark a period of fluctuation in the relationship between the RCC and the NSWC Women's Centre. Early in 1980 another training session readied a second group of volunteers to handle the crisis line. The Women's Centre continued to be used as "homebase" and meetings were held there in the evenings. Messages for RCC volunteers were noted in the logbooks of 1980. There is no mention of the RCC or its work in the logbooks of 1981 or 1982. Examination of the NSWC minutes, however, reveal that the relationship, though less intense, was being maintained. References are made to the RCC sporadically indicating some communication between the groups related to administrative concerns. In August 1981, a note is made that a quarterly audit was being delayed due to lateness of a RCC report (NSWC: Minutes, 17 August 1981) and that the same problem had arisen previously (NSWC: Minutes, 23 November 1981). This issue was noted again in 1983 (NSWC: Minutes, 23 March 1983).

Although none of the women I interviewed remembered a time when the crisis line was not in operation, it appears from the minutes that the line was disconnected in 1983 (NSWC: Minutes, 7 February 1983). The question posed to NSWC members at the February meeting was whether the organisation could help the RCC reconnect the phone. Presumably the phone was cut because of unpaid bills, as indicated in the minutes of 2 April 1984. Plans were made for a discussion with Diane Duggan about how the NSWC could help (NSWC: Minutes, 7 February 1983). The RCC then was composed of only two members and the NSWC posed questions about when the next training session was

going to happen. The NSW Council appeared concerned about there being only two volunteers and wanted some kind of reassurance that another training session was planned.

Months later the minutes indicated that a training session was arranged for the two new co-ordinators of the Women's Centre, one of whom was Beth Lacey. Diane Duggan facilitated the training for the two staff and invited other members of the NSW Council who were interested to participate. An agreement was made that Beth and the other co-ordinator handle rape crisis calls from 9:00 to 5:00 pm, or during working hours, to relieve the stress faced by the two volunteers until a new training session could be organised. Until the training took place, staff at the Women's Centre continued to forward rape crisis calls to the two volunteers, presumably to their home phone numbers.

In 1984, Beth and the other co-ordinator at the time continued to field calls looking for information about rape and handled crisis line calls during their work hours at the Women's Centre. Still, many calls were forwarded to Diane Duggan or Mary Doyle, the other volunteer. Mail for the RCC continued to come into the Women's Centre and was picked up by one of the two volunteers. The NSW Council had obviously taken a renewed interest in the RCC early in 1984 as it was noted that a grant application had been filled out by the RCC. The following meeting noted that there was no news about the application yet (NSWC: Minutes, 6 February 1984; 27 February 1984). NSW Council members worked with RCC to give presentations in schools and over the summer worked together to organise the first Take Back the Night March in St. John's that fall.

The RCC disappeared from the logbook entries again from December 1984 until July 1986, with only very brief references. The "Rape Crisis Line" was an agenda item for NSW in October and November of 1984 and early 1985 and consultation with Diane was planned. A discussion about the RCC was tabled in March 1985 and in April a report was given from one of the NSW members regarding the cost of a portable phone, pager and answering service (NSW: Minutes, 25 March 1985; 22 April 1985). In May, reference was made to a meeting at which the RCC was discussed. The details of the discussion are not recorded (NSW: Minutes, 14 May 1985).

In July 1985, there was a request made to the NSW from the RCC for a loan of \$1600.00 to pay for airline tickets for five women to attend a RCC conference in Prince Edward Island. It was proposed that the NSW and RCC take advantage of cheap airfare to send members of both organisations to this conference. The NSW agreed to lend the RCC the money and members of both organisations went to the conference (NSW: Minutes, 22 July 1985; 5 August 1985). After working together again in 1985 to organise the Take Back the Night march, the issue of the RCC came up in the minutes of the NSW meeting again. Again, the NSW posed questions about when the next training session was going to take place and made reference to the RCC pamphlets describing a twenty-four-hour crisis line which "would not be in operation for some time." The same group that attended the conference in P.E.I would organise the training (NSW: Minutes, 25 September 1985). In December, a "rape crisis committee" met to discuss events at the P.E.I. conference and evaluated the training session (NSW: Minutes, 2

December 1985).

It appears the official crisis line was still not reconnected by 1986. Consideration of how the NSWC could help was noted again in May 1986 and in subsequent meetings correspondence was noted between the NSWC and Diane Duggan. A training course was scheduled to start in October 1986 and in September the minutes noted that in regard to the RCC, "things seemed to be going better. Their answering machine has been hooked up" (NSWC: Minutes, 29 September 1986). A meeting between members of the NSWC and the RCC took place soon after. At this meeting, the RCC reported that interviews for new volunteers were planned for January and the next training session would get underway in February 1987 (NSWC: Minutes, 1 December 1986). There is also a reference to a "mix-up" of some sort that left that RCC assuring the NSWC that a bill had been paid and the RCC would clear up the confusion.

In 1987, a member of the NSWC volunteered to help the RCC with interviews of women interested in volunteering, which would start 15 January 1987 (NSWC: Minutes, 5 January 1987). Later that month, the NSWC seemed to be exasperated with the RCC. The NSWC member who had agreed to help out with interviews was cited as having "had it" with the RCC training and felt that she had done most of the work. A motion was put forward for the NSWC to strike a committee to take over responsibility for working with the RCC, beyond helping out with training. There was unanimous approval and plans were made to discuss this with Diane Duggan (NSWC: Minutes, 27 January 1987). A meeting took place 5 February between four members of the NSWC and three RCC

volunteers (NSWC: Minutes, 9 February 1987). The agenda for this meeting was extensive, covering issues such as training for new volunteers, the repayment of money by the RCC to the NSWC and a proposal for the members of the NSWC to become part of the RCC.

Regarding the money that the NSWC had loaned the RCC, Diane Duggan reported that some of the money had been lent to another Women's Centre who could not repay it. Diane refused to divulge any more information. The NSWC requested receipts from the RCC that involved Take Back the Night expenses or monies raised. The date for the next training session was set. Also, at this meeting, the NSWC asked to be part of the RCC. A note in the NSWC minutes indicated that "at a later meeting, it was decided that this was not acceptable" (NSWC: Minutes, 9 February 1987). It is not clear when or how this decision was reached or by whom. The NSWC was opposed to the idea of volunteers being "interviewed" and planned to put this objection into writing. There was further correspondence between the organisations, including written communication from Diane Duggan regarding concerns with the NSWC and RCC liaison. In March 1987, a resolution was made by the NSWC to set up their own 24-hour rape crisis service, because the members felt that "the needs of women in this community are not being met" (NSWC: Minutes, 2 March 1987).

Later that month, a NSWC member suggested employing a mediator to work out the problems between the NSWC and the RCC. Plans were made to write a letter to the RCC asking for a response by 30 March 1987 (NSWC: Minutes, 16 March 1987). A

reply was received and noted in the minutes of 30 March 1987, again without including the details. A letter was being drafted to send back. The meeting of 28 April indicated a hard-nosed approach being taken with the RCC. Plans were made to draft letters regarding bills for photocopying and discussion ensued about setting a deadline for the NSWC to make a decision about offering their own rape crisis service. The issue was one the members thought should be brought up at the AGM (NSWC: Minutes, 28 April, 1987). In June and July it appeared plans were made to gather information for Women's Centre staff to offer rape crisis counselling.

In August, Diane Duggan reported that a 24-hour rape crisis line was being installed within the week (NSWC: Minutes, 3 August 1987). Whether it was simply the idea that the NSWC were setting up their own rape crisis service that had spurred Diane into action or whether circumstances changed that allowed the re-establishment of the line is not known. By mid-August, there was some resolution to the tension. A crisis line had been set up that was still based in the Women's Centre. Women's Centre staff were not to answer it however; an answering service would pick up and forward the call to an available RCC volunteer (NSWC: Minutes, 17 August 1987; 31 August 1987). RCC meetings were noted in the logbooks as being scheduled to take place at the Women's Centre. The possibility of a liaison person between the organisation was broached again by the NSWC (NSWC: Minutes, 13 October 1987). In the logbooks and NSWC minutes of 1988, the RCC is cited fairly consistently. Meetings were held in the Women's Centre, messages taken and passed on regarding requests for a speaker about rape.

The minutes of 16 February 1988 noted that the NSWC had a problem with the RCC volunteers coming to the Women's Centre during the day to meet clients. The NSWC believed there was no space at the Women's Centre for RCC volunteers to meet clients during daytime hours, as the Women's Centre was the working space for several NSWC employees. The NSWC suggested that they could help by placing an ad looking for confidential space for the RCC (NSWC: Minutes, 16 February 1988). In the summer of 1988, the RCC received funding to hire two students and requested they work out of the Women's Centre. The NSWC however had hired five students who made use of the space in addition to three regular staff so NSWC decided it was not feasible to bring more staff into the already cramped workspace. A RCC volunteer attended a meeting of the NSWC to voice her concerns about the relationship between the two organisations (NSWC: Minutes, 7 June 1988). She attended the meeting as someone personally concerned and not as a representative of the RCC. The RCC volunteer suggested a meeting between the RCC and the NSWC to which the NSWC agreed. The RCC however, declined, citing an already overworked schedule. The RCC said they would consider this again in the fall (NSWC: Minutes, 21 June 1988). The fall of 1988 shows no records of the RCC or contact between the organisations, beyond an "annual report" prepared by the RCC that gave a sparse outline of the activities of the Centre in 1988. Early in 1989, there is a request from the RCC for a loan of \$300.00 needed to pay their phone bill (NSWC: Minutes, 1 February 1989).

The next references to the RCC are made in May 1989 after Diane Duggan's death. In June it is noted that two RCC volunteers (the only two) are "exhausted" and that the answering service had been cut off. The NSWC agreed to have the co-ordinator answer the phone again from 9:00 to 5:00 and suggested the volunteers invest in an answering machine to pick up calls after business hours (NSWC: Minutes, 27 June 1989). The NSWC also suggested calling a meeting for interested people to help out with the line until a new training session could be organised, likely in the fall. In July it was noted that there had been a couple of women who volunteered to help out and that the Centre would use a beeper system. A new training program was scheduled for the fall (NSWC: Minutes, 25 July 1989). Pam Thomas, who had been a RCC volunteer for several years, chaired the Take Back the Night Committee in 1989 and continued to answer the crisis line until more volunteers were found. The last notes in 1989 were that a training session was well underway and the RCC had received \$13 000.00 from the MUN medical students raised through their annual Monte Carlo Night (NSWC: Minutes, 17 October, 1989; 27 November 1989).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the beginnings of the RCC as a Committee of the NSWC. Within two years, the RCC felt it had enough members, and perhaps a different enough focus, that it would benefit from being independent of the NSWC. In the years 1980-1990 volunteers came and went, with a select few remaining involved for extended

periods of time. Diane Duggan, who continued to be involved until her death in 1989, led the organisation and was, at times, one of only two volunteers. Originally, I did not intend to focus on the relationship between the Women's Centre and the RCC. Therefore my questions to the women I interviewed were not specific enough on this issue to extract and discuss the specific roots of the tensions and problems. Both Mary Doyle and Beth Lacey refer to periods when the relationship between the two groups was "not very good" (Doyle) and when there "was not much trust between the RCC and the Women's Centre (Lacey). I have relied on the documents and my interpretation of them, to tell this story. The relationship between the RCC and the Women's Centre fluctuated and the members of the NSWC appeared frustrated with the RCC (or with Diane Duggan, whose name was used interchangeably with the group) at some points. The exact point or points of tension are not documented explicitly. The members of the NSWC might have been frustrated with the RCC asking for help, yet it appears they wanted to and did assist the RCC when necessary. The underlying tones of the minutes of the NSWC in the 1980s seem to indicate a need for reassurance from the RCC that more volunteers were being recruited and trained. Was the concern of the NSWC members, then, that Diane was intentionally keeping the people involved to a minimum? There were concerns about her being the "face of the RCC" even while there were other volunteers.

At a meeting of NSWC and RCC representatives late in the 1980s questions were raised about accountability, i.e. who was the RCC accountable to? The representatives of the RCC, including Diane Duggan, believed they were only accountable to the women

who called the crisis line. This statement illustrates the different philosophies and structures of the two groups. The NSW and Women's Centre were organised hierarchically; people involved recognised that hierarchy and worked within it. The RCC wanted to operate as a collective, and rejected the idea of being accountable to anyone except the women it served. It was not government-funded so it did not need to report to any other body. The NSW, however, was government-funded and was accountable to that funding body in terms of reporting work completed and writing proposals for specific projects. The RCC volunteers did not keep any records, so even if someone were to set out to review the work, there was no way of actually doing so. The members of the NSW were concerned that the needs of women in the community were not being met by the RCC. The group even planned to set up their own rape crisis service. Whether this stemmed from concern about the quality of the service being offered by the RCC or uncertainty about the availability of the crisis line is unknown.

Another way to look at this is as a conflict between Diane Duggan and the NSW. Do my references to the RCC actually cloud an issue with Diane Duggan, who practically had full control of the RCC? Was the NSW's concern with Diane's way of running the RCC and not the RCC itself? In my interview with Wendy Williams, she pointed out that my references to the "RCC" generally would be misleading (2), as it discounted Diane's level of influence and power within the organisation. It struck me as particularly odd that Diane refused to divulge the details surrounding the RCC lending money to another Centre. This indicated to me a sisterhood with another organisation that outweighed its

relationship with and obligations to the NSWSC (as the RCC still owed the NSWSC money). Did the RCC (or Diane) suddenly view the NSWSC as part of the “state” that they (she) refused to work with?

I wondered from the beginning of my research whether the RCC was more radical than the NSWSC. It has become evident through my research that being involved in the women’s movement meant a woman might be considered radical by the public. Within the women’s movement however, there are also degrees of radicalism. Even though it might not have been explicitly stated, it appears there was conflict between the two organisations, based on adherence to, or belief in, principles of collective vs. hierarchical organisation and accountability outside of their respective Centres. The relationship between the organisations would also have been affected by who was at the Women’s Centre, which changed over the decade. It would have been enlightening to read through the communication back and forth between the organisations but I found nothing of that sort. Also it is wise to keep in mind that the information included here represents only one viewpoint, as it comes from the minutes and logbooks of the NSWSC. While I have documents supporting the notion that the NSWSC was frustrated with the RCC, I have nothing that expresses the position of the RCC. Since the RCC continued to seek assistance from the NSWSC, despite tensions, there might have been a sense of obligation that the RCC was drawing on. The RCC might have expected more support from the NSWSC, as it was a funded Women’s Centre, while the RCC was not being funded. In the next chapter, I will focus on the philosophies and activities of the RCC in the 1980s.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE PHILOSOPHIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE
ST. JOHN'S RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

My goal for this chapter is to outline some of the philosophies and activities of the RCC and its volunteers throughout the 1980s. I describe the kinds of activities the volunteers organised and participated in, from meetings to working the crisis line. I also examine the organisation's guiding principles or philosophies and how these translated into the activities the volunteers chose to work on. Although the focus of their efforts might have changed from year to year and as members came and left, descriptions of activities were consistent across interviews. My inquiries into the philosophy of the group might have been misleading, as the group changed over time and philosophies of individual members might have varied. I assumed however, that the group members worked toward common objectives, and thus must have shared some basic philosophies. Also, according to the literature about feminist theory and the women's movement, groups that focused on violence against women were generally radical feminist groups. In this chapter I consider whether this was the case for the RCC.

There are few direct or internal documents outlining or describing the philosophies and activities of the organisation, so the sources for this chapter are the NSW documents and the interviews I conducted with women who were volunteers. I describe the activities thematically rather than chronologically, as the activities seemed to be fairly consistent over the decade. I start by looking at CASAC, the national organisation of sexual assault

centres. The St. John's RCC was a member of CASAC from its beginnings and used the CASAC Constitution as a guide for its analysis of rape and approach to assistance for rape victims. I also examine the actual organisation of the group and the different positions of volunteers within the RCC.

It is impossible for me to completely separate the information given to me by the participants from my own experiences as a volunteer at the Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre. Having been a member of the group and a volunteer, albeit more than ten years later than the time period I am writing about, I was also part of discussions of philosophy and participated in activities such as those outlined below. As I discuss the philosophies and activities, my own experience will no doubt influence my interpretation of documents and information gathered in interviews.

The Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC)

As indicated earlier, CASAC began as the National Association of Sexual Assault Centres at a conference for rape crisis centres in 1975. CASAC's current website identifies itself as a:

group of sexual assault centres who have come together to implement the legal, social and attitudinal changes necessary to prevent, and ultimately eradicate, rape and sexual assault. As feminists [groups] recognise that violence against women is one of the strongest indicators of prevailing societal attitudes towards women. The intent of the Canadian Association is to act as a force for social change regarding violence against women at the individual, the institutional and the political level (Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres).

Today, CASAC has political alliances with other national groups whose work promotes women's equality and anti-violence. The objective of the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres is to implement changes deemed necessary to eradicate rape and all forms of sexual aggression. The Association and its member Centres believe that in order to acquire the power necessary to bring about changes, women must organise their collective strengths in the anti-rape movement. Uniting through the national organisation allows women to achieve more than as individuals and separate groups.

Member centres worked on the national constitution for a couple of years in the late 1970s, critiquing it and suggesting changes to wording so that the Constitution could serve as a point of common ground for all member centres. These drafts were distributed to all member Centres. Each RCC offered feedback to the next national meeting for discussion and compilation. I found early drafts of the CASAC constitution at the Women's Centre, stamped with "RCC" and marked up with editorial comments, questions and suggestions. These drafts did not reveal significant disagreement with the content of the constitution, so it appeared that the St. John's RCC accepted CASAC's basic premises.

Some parts of the constitution left particulars open for individual centres to make decisions about, such as whether or not to focus on services to victims or political reform. There were some fundamental philosophies and principles however that had to be accepted by a Centre in order for it to be a member of CASAC; one of these was a pro-choice stand. It was stated in the medical section of the Constitution that all members had

to be willing to support a woman's choice to terminate a pregnancy. Some women I interviewed believed that being pro-choice was a requirement to be a volunteer at the RCC. Belief in a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy was paramount and the volunteer would have to be able to discuss the possibility of pregnancy and the option of abortion with a caller in order to go on the crisis line. Also related to women's health, in 1981 a resolution was passed stating the Association's refusal to refer women to psychiatrists as they historically deemed women incompetent and unable to make choices concerning their own mental health. Although there was no evidence that the RCC refused to refer women to any mental health professionals, the crisis line was based on the philosophy that women, who were not professionals, could help other women get through this kind of trauma.

Another issue tackled in the national constitution discussion was the role of men in the organisation. The constitution stated that all Canadian Association functions and meetings were to be open to women only (CASAC). There was no mention of this in all the RCC sources I consulted, so it appears that the role of men at the RCC was not an issue in the years up to 1990. Because I did not ask directly about this aspect of the organisation in my interviews and the volunteers I interviewed never brought it up, I do not know if men offered their services and were turned away, or if men never expressed interest. In St. John's, this issue continues to be raised annually around the Take Back the Night march, an activity that is organised by the St. John's RCC, as well as others in North America, that excludes men. Media attention raises debate about the validity of a

women-only march every year.

Confidentiality was such an important issue to CASAC members that, in 1980, a resolution was passed that stated that Centres were obliged to maintain the confidentiality of women who used the Crisis Centre, regardless of legislation (CASAC). The St. John's RCC obviously took client's privacy very seriously as statistics were never kept about callers in the 1980s and documentation of any kind is scarce. Thus it seems that the philosophies and principles of the St. John's RCC were very much in line with the CASAC Constitution. The St. John's Rape Crisis Centre maintained contact with CASAC via a representative from its very beginnings when Joanie Vance, the National Co-ordinator for CASAC visited St. John's prior to the establishment of the RCC. Regional Representatives were set up across Canada to keep each Centre connected with the national body. Diane Duggan might also have been a regional representative at one time for the Atlantic provinces.

The St. John's RCC's Analysis of Rape and Violence Against Women

The St. John's RCC's analysis of violence against women was also very much in line with CASAC's view. CASAC's constitution recognised that although sexual assault could happen to anyone, women were the primary victims of sexual assault. As members of CASAC, Centres agreed that sexual assault was an act of domination, violence and aggression perpetrated through forced physical intimacy against a woman's will and without her consent. Sexual assault was considered exploitation of a woman's body and

was a logical extension of a sexist society, which promoted violence against women. The political and economic structure of a society which viewed women as objects encouraged sexual assault. Vulnerability to assault was also related to the economic and positional imbalance between men and women. CASAC's position, then, was a radical feminist analysis.

According to the RCC, violence against women took many forms: physical abuse, sexual harassment, incest, murder, emotional and psychological abuse and all forms of sexual assault. In a 1987 Take Back the Night march address, Diane Duggan, speaking as a representative of the RCC, asked, "Why is it that over half the population lives in fear of violence? Because men have taught us to be afraid. By raping and beating some of us, they keep control over all of us" (RCC: Duggan "Take Back the Night Speech"). She added that "(w)e cannot wait until the systems which govern our lives help us – because they are all run by men; and it is men who are profiting by our oppression. As women, we have a large task ahead of us. We are going to change the world." Diane's words reflect a radical feminist philosophy. She believed that rape was not going to be eradicated under the conditions of the time. Diane was speaking as a representative of the RCC, but whether each member shared this philosophy is unknown.

The RCC protested insinuations that a woman was in any way responsible for a rape. This was evident in the RCC's objection to the "Lady Beware" rape "prevention" project, which gave women advice about how to prevent being attacked, mugged, or raped. A letter from the RCC protested the entire campaign, stating that it promoted the

idea that women were responsible for being raped (Rape Crisis Centre, "Critical Comment"). There must have been conflicting views on this campaign within the RCC, however, as one former volunteer told me she was involved in arranging to have the pamphlet printed. Protests were also made about questioning a rape victim in court about her sexual history and references to her clothing or behaviour as relevant factors in the assault.

Group Organisation

One of the ideologies of feminist organisations is a tendency towards collectivity and non-hierarchical structure. Hierarchical ways of working together are rejected and attempts are made to incorporate feminist principles into all aspects of the work. The group agrees to work together, and share responsibility and decision-making. Among the RCC documents, I found a paper entitled "How We Work Together" (RCC, "How We Work Together") that reflects this philosophy. It appears to be an outline for the intent of RCC members regarding decision-making and dealing with conflict. It defines consensus decision-making as one characteristic of a collective. All members sharing equal positions within the organisation is emphasized as well as the expectation for a high level of personal commitment from each member to the group. Most of the women I interviewed referred to the organisation of the group as non-hierarchical. In fact it was usually one of the first things mentioned in the interviews. No doubt it was a form of organisation with which most of them were unfamiliar and the intention to work non-hierarchically made a

lasting impression on them.

Some aspects of this ideology were put into action. Former volunteer Pam Thomas remembers meetings that lasted for hours because consensus was sought (Thomas). One concept that became popular in consciousness-raising groups of the 1970s was "rounds." Each member of the group would have an opportunity to speak or "check in" in turn, at the beginning of meetings. What a person chose to say could be very personal and detailed, or it could be just a greeting. Members actually sat in a circle or a pattern in which members could see others, rather than have some volunteers sitting behind others or with someone at the "head" of the table. Mary Doyle, a former volunteer, believes the St. John's group adopted the idea of having rounds from CASAC and said that sometimes the rounds themselves could take an hour (Doyle). Used at the beginning and/or end of the meetings, rounds gave people a chance to say how they were feeling, and gave some closure so that women did not leave meetings without sharing their reactions to heavy, sometimes upsetting, information. Rotating the position of chair at meetings was another attempt to evenly distribute power and responsibility and to give each woman an opportunity to facilitate or lead a discussion.

These group practices reflect the ideals of collectivity and non-hierarchical organisation. However, all of the women I interviewed described "leaders" in the group, which begs the question of whether the group was ever really non-hierarchical. Wendy Williams said that it could never really be a collective as Diane Duggan had invested so much into the RCC, there was never equal power among the volunteers (Williams). Beth

Lacey agreed, saying it “wasn’t strictly a collective, but people didn’t feel they had Diane’s knowledge, ... her history, her strength and her courage, so while they tried to act as a collective, there is no question Diane was the leader” (Lacey).

Aside from the influence that came from Diane’s seniority and experience, there might have been other factors that prevented all volunteers from having equal positions within the RCC. Having to come to a consensus meant pressure on volunteers to decide one way or another, this pressure would most be felt by those holding opinions that were not of the majority. So, although the RCC followed the philosophies of a collective for the most part, the reality was that people at the RCC had different levels of power and influence. A true collective would have meant equal power for all involved, but the practice of relying on more senior volunteers prevented this from happening. Pam said that when she was a new volunteer, she did not openly challenge ideas, not because the “leaders” were intimidating, but because she felt she did not know enough yet. “You couldn’t expect women who just came to the RCC to make those decisions, but we certainly defined ourselves as a collective” (Thomas).

The rejection of hierarchical organising, by itself, means that feminists are defining their organisations by what they are “not” (Dopler 47). Assuming that a group can simply “be” a collective in a society that thrives on hierarchical organisation might be naïve. If all we have ever known has been hierarchical structure, we are at a loss when faced with this new option. If the focus is on “not” being traditional, the group is defining itself negatively. This type of negative defining can be problematic, argues Dopler, because “it

results in unclear boundaries, confusion and contradictions in theory and practice" (47). It can obscure the reality of power differentials within the group. This certainly seems true for the RCC, for there were very real differences in power within the group even as they tried to operate as a collective. Despite describing the organisation as a collective, nearly all the women I interviewed recognised the different positions of volunteers within the group. Not everyone articulated this as a difference in power, though. Janet, for example, did not openly acknowledge hierarchy within the organisation, but named two women as "pioneers," "leaders" to whom she and others looked for guidance (Chafe).

This does not mean that the organising of the group was fundamentally wrong. The issue was not that there were leaders but some women pointed out the danger of not acknowledging the differences in position or power. Wendy Williams said that she has "... always found leaders, in every group, no matter what the organisational structure. [She does] not think a group can survive without leaders" (Williams, Email communication 28 October 2001). And although all of the women I interviewed identified "leaders," the ideal of non-hierarchical organising was not lost on them. Women reported that everyone's input was valued and in-depth discussions preceded most decisions. Looking back, Pam viewed herself and the group as idealistic and realised that it might not have been the most efficient or productive way to get things done (Thomas). Janet believed that a hierarchical form of organising might have made it easier to organise volunteers (Chafe). Nevertheless, the activity of collective decision-making remained a salient feature for most of the women and they felt their experiences were very positive.

Roles within the RCC

In her examination of volunteer work, Jane Pearce identified the roles of volunteers or members in a volunteer organisation as core or peripheral depending on perceived levels of expertise, time and energy invested and commitment (48). Although there is usually no formal distinction made between core and peripheral members, all members know who is in each category. The categories are not permanent, and some volunteers will shift from one to the other. Diane Duggan, having been involved since the beginning, was the core of the RCC while she was there, and was identified by others as having the most experience and knowledge. She was often considered the co-ordinator even though the group was a collective. Others who worked closely with Diane were also considered leaders, including Mary Doyle and Pam Thomas when she and another volunteer took over the RCC in 1989. These women guided decision-making and "organised" the group in terms of running training sessions or meetings. These were the women that newer volunteers turned to for guidance and support. Peripheral members were the ones who followed and often adopted ideas and concepts without challenging them. Cathy felt she was on the periphery and followed the lead offered by Diane Duggan (Duke). The issue of applying for or accepting government funding for example was not discussed and decided by all volunteers from the RCC. Most of the women I interviewed knew nothing about financial matters and one remembered being told why they did not want funding although she was never actually part of a discussion about it (Chafe). She was satisfied that the more senior volunteers knew what was best for the organisation.

Crisis Intervention Model

Nearly all rape crisis centres in Canada were organised around the idea of a hotline or crisis line. Offering support to victims of rape in a way that was anonymous and confidential was seen as vital to the work of anti-rape groups. The work of the RCC was based upon a model of peer support and the belief that in assisting other women, we are helping to end our common oppression. The RCC volunteers used other Canadian rape crisis centres' models for crisis intervention.¹ One of the most important concepts that emerged from these was the conviction that the client was, and should be treated as, an equal. The woman seeking help was seen as a capable, knowledgeable person who, because of her experience, was temporarily incapacitated and needed help. The client's right to privacy and information was paramount. Using a crisis intervention model from Vancouver Rape Relief that advised volunteers to "write up" the call, Diane Duggan added the direction to "ask (the caller's) permission" to do so, and to tell the caller that this would only be used if she wished (for court purposes, for example). Several notes were made that volunteers were not professional counsellors but peers who were intervening in a time of crisis.

¹I found models of crisis intervention from Vancouver Rape Relief, Winnipeg Rape Crisis Centre and Hamilton Rape Crisis Centre stamped "St. John's Rape Crisis Centre" among the archival material from the NSWC.

Feminism

All the women I interviewed believed the RCC was based on a feminist philosophy. This does not mean that they each self-identified as feminist, but rather they felt the organisation and specifically the process of working together was feminist.² Beth Lacey, whose connection with the RCC started in the mid-1980s, believed that “feminist” was the only all-compassing word to describe the RCC and its work. She said that both the RCC, and those volunteering, had to be feminist to do the work and to agree with the analysis. In their work on the crisis line, though, the volunteers rarely entered into a discussion of feminism. Although I believed this silence might have been due to fear of alienating the women who called, Wendy Williams said that it was likely a conscious decision, similar to discussions she had as a member of the Board of a local shelter. “When I was on the board of the transition house, there were many such discussions. We decided that women in crisis needed services, not philosophical discussions. There was no fear of alienation. Women who worked for these groups were already alienated from the norm by deciding to work for women lib organisations” (Williams, Email Communication, 28 October 2001).

For those who were comfortable with the term feminist, I asked whether the RCC differed from that of the Women’s Centre in its feminism. My assumption, as stated earlier, was that it might have been more radical, considering that many Canadian RCCs

²In Chapter Five, I discuss individual responses to questions about being a feminist.

developed out of radical feminist thinking and organisations. Apparently I was asking the wrong question, since nearly all the responses I got were about the Women's Centre. Ruth believed the RCC might be seen as more radical in the sense of being more focused on male violence (Pierson). This does not mean it was viewed that way by the general public in the 1970s or 1980s. The volunteers who were around in the 1970s remembered being labelled "radical" as a result of their connection with the Women's Centre and the women's movement in general. The NSWC Women's Center was considered radical by other women's centres across Canada. Wendy Williams believes that this was because of its public pro-choice stance. Beth Lacey pointed out that the general public might have thought helping victims of rape was not radical at all. The concept of rape was generally not acceptable. Most people believed rape was a rare occurrence, perpetrated by strange, often mentally ill or very cruel, men. This view of rape was easy to condemn and so a group of women working to help victims could be seen as exhibiting stereotypically female, caretaking behavior. The RCC might have been viewed as another "helping" service that women had organised, not as a protest to existing state services. The issue of abortion however, which the NSWC took a stand on, was then and remains a controversial issue. Even though the RCC was also pro-choice, most people might not associate the two issues and might not even think about the stand of the RCC in regards to abortion. Also, the assertion that women had not reached equal status with men and their lobbying for change made the NSWC appear more radical to the general population (Lacey).

Activities

What did volunteers of the RCC *do*? No doubt the activities varied from month to month, year to year and group to group but records are scant. Activities of the years 1978 and 1979 could possibly be pieced together using the Women's Centre logbooks and the NSWC meeting minutes. For those years, the activities were documented with some regularity as the RCC and NSWC were more intricately connected. Post-1979 however, is more difficult to describe as the RCC branched out from the NSWC and became independent. Entries were not recorded in the Women's Centre logbooks and as the RCC was no longer a committee of the NSWC, it was not a regular item of business on the agenda of that organisation. The RCC itself might have kept minutes and records to some degree but I found none in my search. Janet said all she could remember being on paper was the questionnaire she completed before training (Chafe). Pam Thomas remembered minutes being taken at meetings in a large blue ledger though she said they were very careful about what they wrote concerning women who called the crisis line (Thomas). None of the volunteers remember keeping statistics about women who called the crisis line.

As stated in the previous chapter, the Rape Crisis Centre (i.e., the physical space), for this time period was a back office in the Women's Centre. Participants in my research remember a filing cabinet being kept in that back office. During a meeting, if they needed to refer to documents of any sort they went to this filing cabinet for them. Unfortunately, the present whereabouts or existence of the filing cabinet is unknown, as well as what

exactly was in it. One volunteer believed that the records were destroyed, possibly to protect confidentiality of callers (Williams). There are practically no internal documents from the RCC, thus, the information about the activities and work of the RCC has been gathered from my interviews with the former volunteers I introduced in Chapter One. I have grouped these activities into six main categories: meetings, the rape crisis line, training of new volunteers, Take Back the Night march, presentations and publications, public education on child sexual abuse and finances and fundraising.

Meetings

Meetings were held in the Women's Centre usually after regular business hours. Frequency of meetings changed over time and as deemed necessary, going from once a month early on to once a week at different points. The meetings served several purposes. They provided a chance for volunteers to get together and talk about the work they were doing. Information from CASAC was passed on. Discussion ensued about current events that were relevant to their work, such as media coverage, reports of rape and current court cases. Sometimes a meeting was designated as a consciousness-raising group where one topic was chosen and discussed that particular evening. Training sessions were organised for new volunteers, which would require frequent meetings within a short period of time.

Some volunteers remembered that crisis calls were discussed at meetings without divulging any identifying information, but others claimed that calls were never discussed.

While one volunteer identified discussion of calls as a way to learn from other volunteers (Thomas), another volunteer said they never would discuss calls because there was “nothing to be gained by it” (Petten). June Petten also thought that some people, including the crisis workers themselves and their families, would not call the line if they believed their call was going to be discussed. Two of the volunteers mentioned that talking about calls helped them deal with “chronic callers;” women who needed help, but were beyond the crisis stage and the counselling capacity of the volunteers. The practices of having rounds and rotating the position of chair were also part of the meetings of the RCC.

The Crisis Line

The work of the St. John’s RCC was focused around providing a 24-hour crisis line for victims of sexual assault. The efforts made to keep this service available to rape victims indicates the importance the group placed on it. Even when the RCC consisted of only two volunteers in the mid-1980s, calls were forwarded to a volunteer’s home. The procedure for handling a call depended on the needs of the caller. Volunteers were instructed to listen and let the woman talk about her experience. They were given information about how to ask open-ended questions and to let the woman direct the conversation. It was important to tell the woman that what had happened to her was not her fault and information was to be provided in a non-judgmental fashion with no advice or opinions given. No volunteer was to pressure the caller into doing anything, such as

press charges. The caller was always to have control of what was going to happen next, as the assault was a situation that rendered her powerless. In the case of a woman who had been assaulted very recently, the volunteer broached the subject of medical attention and offered to accompany the woman to a hospital. She stayed through the rape exam and interview, if the woman wished. If the assault victim was interested in pressing charges, she was given relevant information and again the volunteer offered to accompany her to the police station or to court. Mary Doyle remembered that one of their rules was that the volunteer who first received a call would be available for that woman from then on. Accompanying the woman to the police station or to court would be the responsibility of that same volunteer, so that the woman would not have to meet or tell her story to more than one volunteer (Doyle).

The procedure for operating the crisis line changed. At times, volunteers took turns with a beeper that indicated when someone called the crisis line. The caller would enter the number where she could be reached and the volunteer would return the call. Volunteers kept the beeper for varying lengths of time and took responsibility for getting it to the next volunteer. It was not unusual for someone to have the beeper for several days at a time. In later years, the RCC employed an Answering Service, which took a call and then connected the caller to a volunteer at her home telephone number. The more volunteers available, the less time each person would have to be available for the crisis line. During the mid-1980s Beth Lacey remembers there were just two volunteers operating the crisis line. Beth helped by handling the crisis line during regular business

hours, along with her work as Co-ordinator of the Women's Centre, until they organised another training session and got more volunteers. Late in the 1980s two other women, Pam Thomas and one other volunteer, shared responsibility for the crisis line for a week at a time each, until they organised a new training session.

Not all RCC volunteers were deemed suitable for crisis line work. In fact some women who volunteered were not given the opportunity to handle the crisis line. I asked the women I interviewed what criteria were used to deem someone "inappropriate" and who made the decisions. Mary Doyle believed that Diane Duggan would have had a big part in those decisions (Doyle). There was no defined process for screening, but it happened just the same. None of the women disagreed with this process, but none identified themselves as people who made decisions about whether or not someone was appropriate. Cathy Duke remembers being on the sidelines when Diane Duggan spoke to a woman and told her that although she wanted to help, Diane believed she needed more time to deal with her own situation. Cathy said that the woman respected this decision. This example of someone being unsuitable because she herself had been assaulted but had not really "dealt with it" appears to have been accepted by the volunteers.

June Petten added that even a tone of voice could make a difference to the caller, so those things needed to be taken into consideration (Petten). All the women I interviewed had been deemed "qualified" by other people, usually Diane Duggan and perhaps other senior volunteers, to be on the line. Nobody remembers there being any hurt feelings or resentment from women who were asked to help by doing other things.

Mary added that after the training some people were only too happy to be asked to stay off the line (Doyle). June also believed that not everyone was in a position to take the pager. For example, they would need to have access to transportation in case a woman called and requested accompaniment to a hospital or the police station. All of the women I talked to were “qualified” to go on the crisis line, so the perspective of those who wanted to go on the line, but did not get the opportunity, may be quite different.

Training of New Volunteers

The first people interested in rape crisis were associated with the Women’s Centre and the NSWC. They, Diane Duggan in particular, gathered information from other rape crisis centres across Canada and from the National Association for Canadian Rape Crisis Centres and basically taught themselves to be rape crisis volunteers. The initial group then organised training for any woman interested in the issue who was willing to volunteer. The first volunteer training session took place at the Women’s Centre, 9 October 1978 with thirteen people present (NSWC: Logbook, 9 October 1978). Between 1978 and 1990, the RCC offered training approximately once a year to between six and twelve volunteers at a time. The exception to this might have been in the mid-1980s when there was only two volunteers. Training was then held for the Women’s Centre co-ordinators until a new training session was organised. Advertisements were sometimes placed in the local newspapers for volunteers and some women remember being recruited because of their knowledge base.

Training included discussions of various topics, guest speakers and practice calls or role-plays. Sessions were held for two or three hours, one night a week for 10-13 weeks or for three consecutive Saturdays, totalling approximately 30 hours of training. Among other consciousness-raising topics, violence against women was discussed, with volunteers who had already been trained acting as facilitators. Issues of confidentiality and group process were outlined, as well as how the group worked together. Information concerning sensitive ways to deal with crisis, suicide and crank calls was shared. Guest speakers were brought in from various agencies and professions.

In 1979, for example, training was held over a weekend. Resource people that were invited included Marge Campbell from Memorial University of Newfoundland's School of Social Work, Calvin Barnes from the Criminal Investigations Department of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and Ruth Peters from the Crown Prosecutor's office. The current members of the RCC also participated as facilitators (Duggan, "Rape Crisis Report"). These people informed the volunteers of the process the victim of an assault would go through if she went to a hospital for an examination, to the police to report the assault, or to court. Training sessions might have also included a representative from Planned Parenthood, the medical profession, or a mental health organisation. Sometimes a woman spoke about her experience as a victim/survivor of rape. The volunteers gathered information about procedures to know what usually happened when a woman went to the hospital or the police after being raped. This information was passed on to callers so that they knew what to expect if they decided to seek help from any of those agencies.

The number of volunteers who commenced training might be far more than the number of women who actually volunteered. Mary Doyle said that some people left during the training because they became overwhelmed with the information received about the prevalence and effects of sexual assault (Doyle). For those who completed the training, the length of time they continued to volunteer varied. Some informants said that women who decided to leave were supported in their decision even though it meant fewer volunteers to share the work (Chafe). Others felt a lot of pressure to give everything they could (Williams).

From the interviews and documents it seems the number of volunteers varied but probably never exceeded a dozen and was more likely a half dozen or so active at any one time. Keeping volunteers was a problem both when I was at the RCC in 1998 and when Janet was involved in the late 1980s (Chafe). I wondered if some women did not leave because of the significant commitment it took to be a volunteer. The women I interviewed all left the RCC after a lengthy stint as volunteers. Perhaps there are more volunteers who left much sooner, once they realised how much time and energy being a volunteer required. No one has said this outright but from personal experience and from talking with other women who volunteered in the 1990s, it seems that volunteer workload was the main reason for leaving, however much time had been spent there. Women might be reluctant to say this as it might be interpreted, as Wendy Williams observed, as not being

committed enough.³

Take Back the Night (TBTN)

The first "Take Back the Night" march in St. John's took place in the fall of 1984. The first Take Back the Night Committee was composed of members of the RCC and the NSWC Women's Centre. To my knowledge, the march has been organised every year since with a volunteer of the RCC usually chairing the committee. The march was started in the United States and was adopted by CASAC in 1981; the latter group designated the third Friday in September as the night for Canadian groups to march (CASAC). Although it began as a one-evening march, Take Back the Night was later extended into a weeklong event which included a poster-making and film night. Fund-raisers for the RCC became part of the festivities which included a dance after the march. Beth Lacey was part of the first year's organising committee and remembers it fondly. Once someone expressed interest, a group came on board very quickly. "We just sort of hauled everyone in and what a time that was! It was amazing!" (Lacey). Beth also remembers an elderly woman who lived next door to her who she knew as an acquaintance. The evening of the march, when Beth left home, the door opened and the older woman said, "You're going to the march! Good luck!" Beth felt like she was marching for her too, that all women were connected (Lacey). The first night was one to remember for anyone who attended

³I will discuss this more in the relevant section of Chapter Five.

because “the heavens opened up and ... poured” (Lacey). About one hundred and forty women braved the weather for the initial Take Back the Night.

The march began just after it became dark, around 7:00 p.m., at Bannerman Park near the Women’s Centre and proceeded towards downtown St. John’s as it still does. On the march women carried placards and posters with slogans such as “Women Unite, Take Back the Night” and anti-violence messages. Women marched together and chanted slogans protesting violence against women. Safety women were introduced who would try to keep the marchers together and safe from traffic. Stops were made en route – usually one at the Courthouse, where someone spoke about the “injustices” of the justice system. The march ended at City Hall with more speeches.

Only women and children were welcome on the march, an issue that continues to be raised and questioned by the media and a few members of the public every year. The premise for excluding men is that it is the only night of the year when women can walk without fear. Every other night women who walk alone are in fear of being attacked, robbed or raped. Men were asked to show their support by providing childcare, transportation, or donating money to the rape crisis centre. Men were welcome at other Take Back the Night activities including joining the marchers at City Hall to hear speeches from representatives of different organisations. Janet remembered that one year the RCC invited female politicians to participate but they did not receive a response from any of them, and none showed up at the march (Chafe). Other organisations that have been involved over the years include Transition House (later Iris Kirby House), Women’s

Resource Centre at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Mediawatch, and Planned Parenthood. Over the years, topics for speeches have included all forms of violence against women, rape, child sexual abuse, pornography, prostitution, wife abuse, sexism and images of women in the media. This gives some idea of the broad view of violence against women held by the RCC.

Presentations and Publications

Although a main focus of the RCC was helping victims of sexual assault, preventative work through public education was also an important part of the work. The volunteers believed that the more people knew about sexual assault the less tolerance they would have for it. At the end of 1979 the "St. John's Rape Crisis and Information Centre" submitted a report to the NSWC which outlined its goals. These included providing "crisis intervention support to victims of sexual assault, and their families" and "education to any group or individual on all aspects of rape and sexual assault" (Duggan, "Rape Crisis Report"). Proposed projects included self-defence workshops, development and implementation of an educational program to all schools and a new volunteer training program. Financial assistance to produce educational materials and purchase audio-visual equipment was listed as the greatest need. In the late 1970s, many local radio and newspaper journalists interviewed Diane Duggan. This was a good way to get publicity for the RCC, and to let women who had been assaulted know it existed. The publicity and open discussion also brought attention to the fact that rape was a prevalent, local problem,

as the RCC reported that women of Newfoundland and Labrador were phoning the Centre.

Over the years, representatives from the RCC spoke to many groups about the issue of sexual assault. Public speaking on the issue helped to educate the population about sexual assault and to dispel common myths. Groups that requested a speaker from the RCC included high school classes, medical students, nursing assistants and women's groups (Duggan, "Rape Crisis Report"). Presentations were made to guidance counsellors and judges. In 1988, "Here and Now" reported on a convention where Diane Duggan spoke to a group of medical professionals about how to sensitively deal with victims of sexual assault (Boone, 27 May 1988). In 1990, volunteers spoke to various groups including Memorial University nursing students and a Women's Studies class at Memorial University.

In 1980 a brief was prepared and presented to the Canadian Human Rights Commission regarding marital rape (Rape Crisis Centre, "Regarding Marital Rape"). Press releases provided a means to publicly protest decisions made by the courts and government. Pamphlets produced by the RCC included one for women called *Self Protection* and another for medical professionals called *How to Care for the Sexually Assaulted Patient*. In 1990, a pamphlet called *Breaking the Silence* was produced which offered statistics about the prevalence of sexual assault and gave up-to-date information about the RCC.

Public Education on Child Sexual Abuse Issues

The RCC also focused on public education and awareness around the issue of child sexual abuse. Even though children were probably not likely to call a rape crisis line, the RCC did receive calls from adults who were still having nightmares from their experience of being abused as a child. Aside from this, the RCC was a resource in the community for adults who discovered a child in their lives had been the victim of abuse. On a larger scale, when the story of priests and Christian brothers abusing young boys in their care broke in the mid-1980s, many people turned to the RCC for answers. Just as the RCC viewed rape as an expression of violence and domination over women, it believed child sexual abuse occurred in the context of an imbalance of power. The situation of young orphans in care was a perfect example of this. The work of the RCC in educating the public about the dynamics of sexual abuse might have permitted and enabled victims to speak up about their experiences.

The RCC volunteers knew child sexual abuse was a problem before it became a public issue. They devoted much time and effort to education about the reality of child sexual abuse. As early as 1978, Diane Duggan and another volunteer were asked to speak at the Janeway children's hospital about child sexual abuse. In October of 1979, the RCC presented a workshop on the topic at an annual conference for Guidance Counsellors in Gander, Newfoundland. Based on the response from that group, an application was made to the International Year of the Child Committee for funding to produce a pamphlet. Two volunteers, Mary Doyle and Diane Duggan, researched the subject further and prepared a

pamphlet to educate the public about child sexual abuse. These were distributed to more than two hundred agencies in the province including police stations, hospitals, schools and social work departments.

In October 1985, Diane Duggan was one of several community activists who spoke to the Justice Department regarding proposed amendments to laws pertaining to child abuse. Identified as the Co-ordinator of the RCC, Diane asserted that "critical changes have to be made," and the laws toughened (Southey, 1 October 1985). She also added that the procedure for children giving evidence in court needed to be made less traumatic for them. Anne Budgell interviewed Diane about child abuse on CBC Television that same day (Budgell, 1 October 1985). Diane revealed that many women who called the crisis line were in fact abused as children and were still grappling with long-term effects, such as depression, drug abuse, and even suicidal thoughts and attempts. Diane gave a similar interview in April of that year when lawyers and community groups met to discuss child sexual abuse in a meeting sponsored by the Community Services Council. The RCC was very visible in protesting lenient sentencing for child sexual abuse and did several television interviews on this topic. In 1985, the Rape Crisis Centre made a statement against the five-month sentence of a man convicted of child sexual abuse (Seward, 14 November 1985). In April 1987, Diane Duggan represented the Rape Crisis Centre in a panel discussion of guidelines for schoolboards to deal with reports of child sexual abuse (Stamp, 9 April 1987).

One of the things that women I interviewed said about the usefulness of their training and experience with the RCC was that it prepared them for dealing with suspicions or reports of child abuse later in their professions. The RCC training filled a lacuna in their formal education. Wendy Williams remembered that in the psychology courses she did while she was in the school of Nursing at Memorial University of Newfoundland, her class was told that they would likely never see a case of child abuse in their career as it was so rare (Williams).

Finances and Fundraising

Volunteers did the bulk of the work of the RCC. The RCC did not have core funding from the provincial or federal government from its establishment up to 1990. Mary Doyle remembered that there was money at different times (to hire students for the summer, for example) but she could not remember where that money came from. Municipal assistance came in the form of a \$1000.00 grant given in 1978 and each following year to pay for the 24-hour crisis line. Donations were welcome. One contribution of \$100.00 is mentioned in the logbooks of 1979, but otherwise I found no other documentation about financial aspects of the organisation (NSWC: Logbook, 4 February 1978). Late in the 1980s the Medical School of Memorial University donated the proceeds of its annual Monte Carlo night to the RCC, which was approximately \$10,000.00 (NSWC: Minutes 27 November 1989; Chafe; Thomas).

The women I interviewed explained that not much money was needed in those days. The phone was paid for by the grant from City Hall and volunteers did the rest of the work. The back office of the Women's Centre was always available rent-free and files and supplies could be kept there. Photocopying and other in-kind donations were provided by the Women's Centre where the RCC also held their meetings. CASAC provided either partial or full funding for attendance at regional and national conferences (Doyle). Janet remembered going to a flea market with brochures and information and people gave small donations (Chafe). Take Back the Night activities might have raised money for the Centre, especially when the night was extended into a week of activities.

Canadian RCCs were (and still are, to some extent) part of a national debate about whether or not feminist organisations should seek or accept funding from government, as was outlined in Chapter Two. The dilemma was that without funding, the organisations were limited in the work they could do. Relying on volunteers and with few or no resources, centres might not have the means to do public education or even keep a crisis line open. Accepting funding from government, however, meant time and energy invested in writing proposals to request money and then compiling reports on how the money was spent. An organisation's ability to criticise government would also be compromised if it depended on government for survival.

Whether or not the St. John's RCC sought money from governmental sources depended on the year and the volunteers present. Mary Doyle, who was involved with the RCC for about ten years, said that they requested and applied for money but were not

successful in securing it (Doyle). Janet Lee Chafe remembered that although she was not part of a discussion about it, her understanding was that the RCC did not want money and had not asked for it because they would be accountable to the government. At least two of the women I interviewed believed that Diane Duggan was against accepting money from the state and led the organisation in this decision. It seems, however, that Diane was, at least initially, willing to accept government funding as it is reported in the NSWRC minutes and logbooks that she applied for money from a couple of different sources to open the RCC. Back in 1977, Diane applied to a federal government office (then Manpower, now Human Resources Development Canada) for money, but was turned down. The rejection of state money might have come up later as different members joined the organisation. If Diane Duggan led the group in this decision, then she did so later in the development of the RCC.

Conclusion

In reviewing the philosophies and activities of the RCC there are some ways in which it fell short of ideals expected from a radical feminist organisation. The RCC did work with the "state" and in fact enlisted the help of personnel in the medical professions and the police force for volunteer training. Different grants were applied for, indicating a willingness, at different times, to be government-funded. Also, whether this came up as an issue or not, the RCC was housed in a building of a government-funded organisation. The RCC benefited from that funding in terms of the resources and in-kind donations the

NSWC offered the RCC. Had the RCC taken on a position of totally rejecting state resources, they would have rejected those from NSWC. As stated earlier there was also a gap between ideology and action regarding decision-making and other group processes.

More in line with what is associated with radical feminism, the RCC was separatist in its membership and exclusion of men. Men were not volunteers and were not welcome on the Take Back the Night march. The focus on men's violence against women was radical and the establishment of the RCC was in itself a rejection of (state) services already in place. Volunteers also remember a time when the RCC was adamant about not wanting funding.

The missing filing cabinet might be indicative not only of the importance of keeping confidentiality but distrust of the state. Could the RCC have altered its documentation to keep names and identifying information confidential, while at the same time recording statistics and information about its activities? Wendy William believes this could have been done. It was an ultimate distrust of the state and what it would do with this information that prevented the information from being accessed by anyone else. Wendy also hypothesised that unwillingness to show evidence of work might have been due to feelings of insecurity in individuals. These women were not professionals and perhaps they feared criticism. Was that an issue for the volunteers? Refusal to keep statistics and be accountable to a higher body was also a radical action.

The question, then, of whether the RCC was radical, cannot be definitively answered. It was radical in some of its actions and some of its philosophies, but not in

others. Was there one “RCC philosophy” or were there as many philosophies as there were members? Were the women involved radical feminists? In the next chapter, I will consider this as I introduce the women I interviewed more fully. I describe each woman’s experiences at the RCC and reflect on common themes and topics that came up in my conversations with these women. I also explore Diane Duggan’s role in shaping the RCC.

CHAPTER FIVE:

VOLUNTEERING AT THE RCC

Canadian women have a long tradition of volunteering. They have built institutions, provided charitable services, secured women's rights and challenged social injustices (Status of Women Canada 1). Some would argue that women's relationship to their volunteer work takes on a different meaning than that of men's. In the past, this might have been related to many women not having paid employment or work outside the home. It might have also been related to the nature of the work they volunteered for. Offering time to help victims of rape and to handle crisis line calls, for example, can be much more stressful and demanding than more traditional kinds of volunteer work.

In this chapter I focus on the women I interviewed and their reflections on their experiences as RCC volunteers.¹ In the interviews I asked each woman how she first heard about the RCC and to describe her initial experiences there. I also inquired about the circumstances surrounding her decision to leave the RCC and her feelings about leaving. None of the women thought of her time at the RCC as "just volunteering." The importance these women assigned to their volunteer work made it fulfilling but also led to

¹This chapter relies almost exclusively upon my interviews with the women who were volunteers at the RCC. It can be assumed that statements relating to each participant's experience came from my interview with her. In cases where I am commenting on her experience, I make it clear that it is my analysis and in cases where one participant spoke about another, I reference the source. I have referenced direct quotations. The tapes of the interviews will be deposited at Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore Archives.

feelings of obligation and guilt when they left. Similar themes arose from each interview: a sense of belonging at the Centre and feelings of regret and guilt about leaving. The women I interviewed talked a lot about the group dynamics and their feelings as part of that group. Actual crisis line work was not as prominent in their recollections of being a RCC volunteers. Mary Aylward was the only one who said she was not interested in aspects other than the crisis line such as decision-making, and she did not care to participate in discussions about group process. Although all of the women placed a great deal of importance on the work, almost all of them minimized their own contribution, saying that they might not have done as much work as some others. Each woman, depending on her circumstances coming into the RCC and her experiences there, took something different from her volunteer work. Volunteers felt it was an essential service that was not available from other agencies, and that made it very difficult to quit later, especially when volunteers were scarce.

Coming to the RCC

Volunteers came to the Rape Crisis Centre from different places and under different circumstances. Cathy Duke, now a St. John's businesswoman, was doing a Social Work degree at Memorial University of Newfoundland when she learned about the RCC through a work-term placement at the NSWC Women's Centre. Pam Thomas, who now works with Victim Services, opted for volunteering at a feminist organisation rather than writing a paper as partial credit for a Women's Studies course. Mary Doyle heard an

ad on the radio saying that the RCC was looking for volunteers. She recognised the name of the contact person as a childhood acquaintance. She thought she might be able to help victims of assault and also that she might benefit from volunteering at the RCC, as she had been the victim of an incident of childhood sexual abuse. June Petten, who volunteered in the late 1970s, was a nurse at the time. She believes she answered an ad in a local newspaper. Janet Lee Chafe became involved after being a victim of wife abuse and a resident of Iris Kirby House, a local shelter for abused women that was established by the Newfoundland Status of Women Council. Unlike most other volunteers I interviewed, Mary Aylward first made a decision to volunteer and then sought out an organisation that would suit her interests. She found the RCC. Ruth Roach Pierson, Beth Lacey and Wendy Williams devoted time to the RCC as part of their involvement with the Women's Centre.

As there are no records, there is no way to tally the total number of RCC volunteers. Each woman I interviewed agreed that there were usually ten to twelve women trained but the number of active volunteers would dwindle down to four or five and then a new group would be trained. Providing training to new volunteers took a lot of energy and organisation but was necessary as volunteers left the RCC. With the high turnover rate of volunteers and lack of volunteers at times, these women often felt desperately needed, to the point where they felt guilty about choosing not to volunteer. As noted in the previous chapter, there were times when only two volunteers operated the RCC in the period 1977-1990. In the mid-1980s, Mary Doyle and Diane Duggan ran the

RCC by themselves for two to three years, with help from the two co-ordinators at the Women's Center. In 1989, Pam Thomas and one other volunteer took over the RCC for several months until they could organise a training session for more volunteers.

Benefits from Volunteering at the RCC

The simplest response to the question of what was gained by volunteering was the feeling of satisfaction that comes from "doing good," and helping others. The other main theme that came from the interviews was a feeling of their work being valued within the group and the sense of group belonging. Despite the fact that the organisation never achieved true collective status, the volunteers I interviewed appreciated the process of decision-making in which everyone had input. All the volunteers believed their contributions were appreciated. Some women felt that the concepts they learned and the experiences they had at the RCC benefitted them in both their professional and personal lives. Concepts such as non-hierarchical organisation and the sharing of power, responsibilities and credit have stayed with all of the women. Cathy tries to incorporate feminist principles she learned there into her present work as a manager and in her personal life (Duke). Pam shared with me that she and her partner acknowledge differences in their income and share expenses accordingly, a concept she took from her days at the RCC (Thomas). Pam believes her experiences there prepared her well for future work in other helping professions. After five years of working a crisis line and volunteering, she had enough experience to give her an edge over other applicants for

jobs. In her words, she: "... wouldn't change (her) experiences at the RCC for anything" (Thomas).

It was therapeutic for some women to help others as they had been helped. Janet, who had been assisted by the shelter workers at Iris Kirby House, felt that she was now in a position to do the same. She said that getting involved in the feminist community was also a way to find herself (Chafe). Mary Doyle said that when she decided to volunteer she thought it might help her deal with the incident of child sexual abuse that was never talked about (Doyle). Mary remained connected to the RCC for about ten years.

Some felt that the training and experience at the RCC opened their eyes and changed how they saw the world. Consciousness-raising was a big part of training and helped some women see the connection between different forms of oppression and how rape was linked to women's economic inequality. The idea that the process, how they worked together, was as important as the outcome was a major theme. Pam said that when she first started volunteering, she used to go home wondering what those training sessions had to do with rape and only made connections later (Thomas). Beth Lacey said that she could understand what being involved in the RCC could offer to women. She believed that these women came to the RCC with some awareness of women's oppression and would likely find comfort in the fact that others felt the same way. Some of them knew women who were raped or had been assaulted themselves and wanted to help others. The RCC might have been a "sanctuary for them." Beth herself had great memories of organising the first Take Back the Night March with the RCC in 1984, which

she described as “amazing.” “It was like the first public stand, certainly for me. ... I had such a powerful feeling ..., taking over the streets!” (Lacey). Cathy Duke said that being involved with the RCC and exposure to a feminist philosophy changed her life.

The volunteers I interviewed identified other women they met at the RCC as being very influential people in their lives. Cathy Duke remembers two of the women she met there having a huge impact on her life. Diane Duggan’s personality and commitment drew Cathy to the RCC and advice she received from Wendy Williams was instrumental in Cathy making some major decisions about her life. Janet named Pam Thomas and another volunteer as “fantastic” women who did so much work that she admired them deeply (Chafe). Mary Doyle credits Cathy Duke’s involvement in the RCC with more open discussions about diversity. Most of the women I interviewed commented on work of other volunteers, showing a great deal of respect and admiration within the group.

Most of the women I interviewed downplayed their own contribution to the RCC. Janet said several times in her interview that she “may not have done as much as some volunteers” (Chafe). In her interview, Cathy stressed that she may not have been as immersed as some other people, but that she felt she had contributed as much as she could (Duke). Her involvement was more limited than she would have liked. June echoed these feelings, saying that she might not have “done as much work as some people” (Petten). These reports of the “amount” of work done and time committed concur with the notion of who was “core” and “peripheral” within the RCC. Pam was identified as a core member and she was one of the few volunteers who did not minimize her contribution.

Many volunteers commented on the work of Diane Duggan. Compared to Diane's efforts, it would seem none would ever match her in terms of the amount of time and energy invested, which may account for feelings of "not doing as much as some people."

Leaving the RCC

Most volunteers I interviewed said that volunteering at the RCC was stressful and demanding but worthwhile. Frustrations abounded. Some were frustrated from knowing how much work needed to be done around sexual assault and how limited they were in what they could do. June, for example, had seen rape victims through her nursing work and felt they were only scratching the surface in helping the victims who called the crisis line (Petten). Some were upset by the knowledge they acquired about sexual assault. Mary Doyle remembers that some women left the RCC after training, they were so overwhelmed with the prevalence of sexual assault (Doyle). At times volunteers were frustrated with the group process, as consensus-decision-making could take hours. Pam said that now, looking back, she feels they spent too much time talking when they could have just made a decision (Thomas). Wendy said that she was frustrated sometimes with the women's movement in general, because so much was expected of women. Having been involved with many organisations, she said that was the worst thing about the feminist movement – pressure from other women to do more and the feeling that if you could not give it all, you were not as committed to the cause (Williams). After several months as only one of two volunteers at the RCC, Pam Thomas was very stressed by the

amount of time and energy it required and decided she had done all she could (Thomas).

Most of the women I interviewed said that they left the RCC for one of two reasons: other commitments or stress. Janet was a single mother and decided she could not devote her full attention to a crisis caller and her toddler at the same time. Janet said she felt supported in her decision to leave the RCC. However, she revealed in her interview that she had had several conversations with other volunteers about her decision, individually and as a group. This indicated to me a reluctance to leave or perhaps a need to explain her decision to each member. Janet was a single mother when she began as a volunteer at the RCC, so that circumstance in fact did not change. Her decision to leave then could have been based on having to be on call more often and at times when her daughter needed her attention, or it could have been that she was burnt out or tired from all the time she had already invested. When asked about leaving, Janet said that she had really enjoyed being involved and she "felt bad for putting extra burden on" other volunteers by leaving (Chafe).

Cathy continued to volunteer at the RCC when she started working as a social worker. She decided to quit when she went back to school to study business. The line of work she was in, combined with her volunteer work, took a toll on her physically. Cathy decided that she was not suited for this type of work and sought a career change:

It took me some time to figure out what I was doing and what I ... found was that ... my full-time counsellor work and ... other things I was doing [became] very stressful [and] I wasn't coping well. [S]o I thought I really could not continue working full time in this particular type of job or career for the next twenty-five or thirty years. I decided to change careers

[but continue to] volunteer. But when I went back to school full-time, it was very demanding. Then I got off all the different boards and things I was on at the time (Duke).

Later in the interview, when I shared some of my thoughts about volunteers being stressed and the work being demanding, Cathy said that she had been "burnt out" with her work and volunteer activities. "I remember thinking I can't do this anymore. When I went back to school it was a relief, like I had a legitimate reason to say, 'I'm sorry I can't do this anymore'" (Duke). Her statement reveals the pressure some volunteers felt to stay. The same sort of sentiment was expressed in my interview with Mary Doyle. I asked if she ever felt burnt out or wanted to step back from her involvement with the RCC. She answered, "Oh, very much. But the thing was, I was able to do that because of medical reasons for about a year" (Doyle). It is my impression that these women did not feel they could "just quit." They needed a "legitimate" reason to do so. Whether the pressure to remain a volunteer came from within themselves or from others within the RCC is not clear. When I asked June why she left the RCC, she answered that her work took her out of the city and around the province. I added, "So you didn't have the time anymore." She quickly corrected me, saying "Don't write that. Don't say there wasn't time. Because you could make time" (Petten). Like Cathy and Mary, she felt guilty for removing herself from the work. The volunteers I interviewed took their departure very seriously. They likely realised that their leaving would translate into more work for the other volunteers. Despite the fact that these women said they felt supported in leaving, there might also have been concern about how they would be viewed by the volunteers who were left to

take up the slack.

Pam ended her involvement with the RCC after five years of volunteering and several months of being one of only two volunteers: "I went straight through from '85 – '90, then I took a break. I was burnt out" (Thomas). She said that it became so entrenched in her life that 3:00 a.m. crisis calls were not considered strange occurrences. Pam's feelings of obligation increased considerably when Diane Duggan died. Pam felt that if she did not take over the RCC, it might disappear. Rape victims would have no one to turn to. She also felt an obligation to Diane Duggan, being aware of the work and commitment Diane had to the RCC. She took on the extra work then simply because "there was no one else to do it" (Thomas).

Feminism

In each interview I asked the woman whether she was part of discussions about feminism at the RCC and whether she considered herself a feminist. Seven of the ten women I write about in this chapter were involved in the 1970s; two of them did not consider themselves feminists. In fact, they were not as comfortable with the term "feminist" as much as "women's libber." Both of them defined this as someone who stands up for women's rights. June said that some people went "right to hell with the meaning of it. If you were a women's libber, you wouldn't let anyone open a door for you or take you out to dinner" (Petten). June revealed some familiar stereotypes as she described some women she met at the RCC and the Women's Centre as "men-haters."

Pearce would classify the positions of these two women in the RCC as "peripheral." Does this mean that the core members were feminist, while peripheral members were not? In my examination of interviews, I believe the core members were feminist and self-identified as such. The peripheral members might have varied more. Some had an analysis of violence against women and worked from that analysis, but I believe others did the work as a caring, helping form of volunteerism, without much thought into the root causes or issues. Mary Aylward stated specifically that when she went to the RCC she wanted to volunteer on the crisis line to help victims of assault. She did not want to be part of policy making or discussions around philosophy (Aylward). Janet, who was involved in the late 1980s, relayed a view of feminism that differed in degree. She referred to some volunteers that were "more" or "less" feminist with the more feminist women doing the most work (Chafe).

Ruth Roach Pierson and Wendy Williams, who were also around in the 1970s, did consider themselves feminists but remembered that not everyone felt comfortable using the label. At the time, there was awareness of the danger of alienating the community by using the term. Many women involved with the Women's Centre did not want the Centre to have a "feminist" face because they feared it would deter other women from becoming involved. But there was also an understanding that they would have to call it what it was. The fact that these women who were involved in the Women's Centre and RCC were considered "radical" anyway by the general public, meant that use of the word feminist might not do much more harm, as well. Some women said that in discussions within the

group, and in their analysis, some RCC volunteers were radical feminists. The participants gave names of a couple of women who they believed self-identified as radical feminists. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to interview all the women named in my interviews.

The Volunteers

In the next few pages I briefly look at the experiences of the RCC volunteers that I interviewed. I first consider Diane Duggan who figures so prominently in the history of the St. John's Rape Crisis Centre that it would be impossible to write or talk about the RCC without considering her involvement with, and relationship to, the RCC. She was the "face" of the RCC and her name was synonymous with the Centre. She was named by other volunteers as the leader, the decision-maker, the one who took the most responsibility, the one volunteers called if they needed advice or to talk and the person members of the community called upon for information. Diane spearheaded the establishment of the RCC in 1977 and remained co-ordinator, officially or unofficially, for the next twelve years. Diane committed suicide in 1989 after many months of a severe depression. The personal effects of crisis counselling for 12 years are difficult to measure so it is impossible to tell how much of this contributed to her depression and death. She documented her struggles with her depression and the events that were happening in her personal life on almost a daily basis.

Diane's approach to running the RCC was a topic of discussion both before and after her death within the women's community in St. John's. Some people criticised her apparent unwillingness to relinquish control over the Centre. For a number of years, Diane and one other volunteer, Mary Doyle, were in control of the rape crisis centre. Diane's friends and colleagues are not hesitant to entertain the possibility that that stemmed from a control issue on Diane's part. The more people involved, the less control she would have. She may have been unwilling to let go or share control of the organisation she created. Knowing that the RCC was a reality because of Diane's efforts, Beth Lacey understood her connection to the RCC. She believed that Diane "... didn't trust anyone to feel as committed to it as she did" (Lacey). None of the women I interviewed denied the work, time and energy Diane put into the RCC or her commitment to the women who called the crisis line. Some of the women however, recognised Diane's position within the RCC as one of power and one contradictory to the spirit of the work they were involved in.

Diane Duggan (1942-1989)

Diane was born in Halifax, 1 June 1942 and moved soon after with her family to Montreal (Lee, 11 March 1990, 1). Later, her family relocated to Bell Island, NF when Diane was fourteen years old. She married at nineteen and because of her husband's job, moved regularly from city to city. While living in Kitchener, Ontario, Diane was first introduced to the women's movement. She dropped by the Women's Centre and was

excited by the ideas and views she was exposed to. It was likely in this environment that Diane developed her feminist consciousness and became the strong radical feminist that the women of St. John's later met. Diane became involved with the Canadian Association for Repeal of the Abortion Law (CARAL) and visited Newfoundland as part of this organisation in the early 1970s. In the mid-1970s Diane and her family moved back to Newfoundland. Diane introduced herself to the women's community in St. John's by volunteering at the Women's Centre and becoming a member of the NSWC. Diane became co-ordinator of the Rape Crisis Committee of the NSWC and led the establishment of the Rape Crisis Centre in the late 1970s. From the beginning, "Diane was the person who was willing to take on the issue of rape. Everybody was busy doing their thing and Diane's thing was rape crisis" (Williams).

Diane volunteered for the "House Committee" of the NSWC and became an integral part of the process of buying a new house and renovating it to be used as the new Women's Centre. Mary Doyle said that right from the beginning, Diane wanted to make sure that a RCC was part of this building and there was a contract drawn up stating that there would always be room at 83 Military Road for the RCC (Doyle). Wendy Williams said that it was always understood that the back office would be the RCC. How that came about exactly, she did not know, but assumed that Diane had said it would be the case and no one disagreed with her (Williams). Ruth remembered planning meetings for the RCC and Diane made an impression on her as someone who knew a lot about RCCs in Canada (Pierson).

As co-ordinator, Diane reported on the status and progress of the rape crisis committee at NSW meetings up until 1979, when the RCC decided it was an organisation independent of the Women's Centre in terms of its decision-making and mandate. In the years that followed, Diane became known in the community as a spokesperson for the RCC and on the issue of rape and child abuse in general. Diane acted as co-ordinator of the RCC, counselled women, trained volunteers and organised the work. She continued the work through her depression in the late 1980s until her death in April 1989.

Of the women I interviewed who knew Diane, all identified her as the co-ordinator or leader of the RCC. Most of the volunteers I talked with believed this was the case because Diane was more committed to the issue and organisation than anyone else. Also, at any point in time, she would be the person with the most experience and most knowledge about the RCC. Many felt they had no right to criticise or disagree. The volunteers who talked about Diane all respected her leadership and, in fact, looked to her for guidance. Mary Doyle remembers that it was not always Diane who put herself in the role of leader. As Diane did a lot of public work, her name became synonymous with the RCC, so inquiries from the community, and even the women's community, would be directed to Diane. Pam remembered that it was a problem for Diane at different points and it was discussed among the volunteers of the RCC because Diane and the volunteers felt they were not given due credit for their work. At the same time, Pam said there were times when Diane liked being the public face of the RCC (Thomas). Mary Doyle agreed

that Diane often relished the position she was in, but she was usually put in that position by others, as they always turned to her for guidance and information (Doyle).

Diane was described by some of the women I interviewed as strong-willed and stubborn, but a woman to be admired and respected. Mary Doyle remembers that when she first met Diane, she recognised that this was a person with a lot of knowledge (Doyle). Cathy decided to volunteer at the RCC because she liked what she saw in Diane. Today, she thinks Diane was one of the most influential people of her life (Duke). Beth Lacey said Diane was very opinionated and could argue with the best of them especially, if you disagreed with her. "But she was out there, she worked like a dog. (S)he had strong opinions that were different from mine on a number of issues ... but I had a lot of respect for Diane" (Lacey).

In the fall of 1988 Diane began to document her struggles with a depression that was worsening. She continued her work with the RCC and to speak publicly on the issue of violence against women. Other women and friends of Diane realised at some point that she was not well and encouraged her to seek help. Looking back they see that she was not well enough to be counselling other women. Diane's view of "counselling" however was that of two women sharing experiences, so she may not have seen her illness as interfering with her ability to do that. Her earlier fears about women not being in the mental space necessary to help others did not seem to apply to herself. Jennifer Mercer, a long-time associate of Diane's, believed that this pointed to the severity of Diane's illness (Lee, 11 Mar 1990, 19).

Diane's empathetic responses to other women's suffering were not reflected on herself and she berated herself for being so weak that she needed to seek help. Diane was caught in a trap of always being the one that others turned to for help. If control was an issue for Diane, it must have been devastating for her to lose control over what was happening to her mind. Perceptions of Diane as strong and practically invincible would make it hard for those around her to see the suffering she was enduring. Before she died Diane dropped into the Women's Centre, "to say goodbye to the place (she) loved for so long" (Lee, 18 Mar 1990, 19). Women in the community were shocked, angered, and saddened by her suicide. What Diane had done was so opposed to the life she had lived. She had committed herself to fighting violence, to changing the lives of women. Many felt betrayed.

Personally, I have been touched by what I have learned about Diane Duggan. I never knew her and she died at a time when I was just learning about feminism. Her commitment to helping women who were victims of sexual assault was remarkable and the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre is still helping women today, largely due to her vision and commitment. Through her work in the feminist community and through the crisis line, Diane has touched the lives of many people.

Wendy Williams

Wendy Williams was involved with the NSWC from its beginnings. In the late 1970s she was a part of the House Committee with Diane Duggan and two other women, which had the task of searching for a house to buy and then organising renovations. Wendy remembered Diane's interest in rape crisis. She remembered that it was a time when there were so many issues being brought to the table, that if someone stepped forward to take on responsibility for one issue, everyone else was glad to have one less thing to do. She said that for most of the time, the women involved were consumed with keeping the Women's Centre operational. Wendy does not remember details about the establishment of the RCC, only that the back office of the house on Military Road was used for rape crisis work. Wendy took her turn with the beeper. Her background in Nursing, she felt, was evidence that she could handle the work.

Wendy's feelings about the women's movement at that time are mixed. In her interview, I read the excitement she remembered about that time, but also the frustration with the demands and expectations put on women, even by other well-intentioned women. She felt that there were some that would not accept anything less than everything you could give. Wendy was later involved in training new volunteers, again due to her background in Nursing and her involvement with Planned Parenthood. Wendy pointed out that in fact being expected to do these things for free was a kind of exploitation in itself. She said that that was one of the worst things about the feminist movement. She said that even in organisations where women were helped, there was that expectation that

they then get involved and help any way they could. Looking back Wendy can see how although they talked about power imbalance in "society" there was little acknowledgement of power imbalance and abuse of power within the women's movement and within the St. John's organisations.

Ruth Roach Pierson

Ruth remembered hearing about a planning meeting for the rape crisis centre at a meeting of the NSWC. She decided to volunteer partly because she was going through a marriage break up and figured it would be a good time for her to volunteer for a good cause. Looking back, Ruth said what might have also influenced her decision was the fact that she was the victim of a rape attempt about ten years earlier. When Ruth was a graduate student, a man chased her into a washroom and pinned her down on the floor. Luckily, someone saw the man enter the washroom and arrived with help shortly afterward. Ruth remembers a friend of hers suggesting that there must have been something about her that signalled vulnerability.

Although Ruth never had to deal with a call on the RCC line, her skills did come in handy when she moved to Toronto and the daughter of a friend of hers was raped. The training she received at the RCC enabled her to go and spend time with the woman and talk to her about what had happened. Looking back, Ruth credited her experience with the RCC with acquainting her with feminist theory that dealt with rape and violence against women. At this stage in her career Ruth was teaching women's history at

Memorial University of Newfoundland and was quite familiar with many feminist theorists and theories. Her involvement with the RCC, which included attendance at a conference for Sexual Assault Centres, introduced her to feminist theorists who dealt with and analysed rape. Ruth said it "heightened her (radical) feminist profile even more" (Pierson). What she learned affected her understanding of happenings in her own life.

June Petten

June believes she responded to an ad in the newspaper seeking volunteers for the RCC in the late 1970s and stayed for several years, although she could not remember when she stopped volunteering there. Records show that she was there in 1978 when the RCC was first established (NSWC: Logbooks). She said there were about six or seven volunteers then who handled the crisis line. As well, there might have been volunteers who did other types of work who were not on the crisis line. June believed her background as a psychiatric nurse qualified her for this type of work. June remembered that securing money to pay for a pager or beeper was a major concern when she was there. The RCC asked Newfoundland Telephone to donate a pager or a beeper, but the company refused. June figured it was because they were dealing with rape at a time when nobody even wanted to talk about it.

June's description of being a RCC volunteer in the late 1970s was much different from how Janet remembered her days in the late 1980s. June said when she went to the RCC, there was no social aspect to the group and volunteers did not share any personal

information. She thought the other volunteers probably did not even know her last name or how many children she had. With regards to meetings, June said that when she was there no calls were discussed at meetings. To the volunteers of that time, "confidentiality" meant no discussion about the call. June reminded me that if one of the volunteers needed to avail of the services, they might not if they knew it would be discussed among the volunteers. As with many women involved in the women's movement at that time, the RCC volunteers might not have been aware of the stress and effects working a crisis line can have on the volunteers. When I pointed out that discussions might relieve stress or help newer volunteers, June responded that they were trained to deal with it. She described the training as extensive and said that the women on the line were very qualified to do the job.

June was very aware of the stigma of rape in those days. She said people were afraid to talk about it. She said she often went weeks without a call, which she attributes to the very deep stigma attached for victims. When June decided to stop volunteering, it was because of work obligations that took her geographically away from the area. She believed that it was commendable that women devoted so much time to the Centre and to helping rape victims. June said that she was proud that she was part of those early years of the RCC.

Mary Doyle

Mary came to the RCC in 1978 after hearing an ad on the radio. She thought she would go to the RCC to volunteer and hopefully help others. There was also the idea, though, that she might gain some skills and knowledge that would help her deal with an incident of child sexual abuse that she experienced. Mary said that she had led a very sheltered life and her experiences at the RCC really opened her eyes. As a teacher, Mary would learn about other children's abuse. Her training at the RCC prepared her for that possibility at a time when much of society denied such things ever happened.

Mary remained involved with the RCC until the late 1980s. Her health took her away from very active involvement for periods of time. Of the volunteers I interviewed, Mary had been at the RCC the longest. Mary said that of the group she was trained with, she was the only one remaining at the RCC one year later. At one point, for a couple of years, Mary and Diane Duggan were the only two rape crisis centre volunteers handling crisis calls. Mary said people would drop in and out of the RCC. There would be people around who would get involved for short periods helping out and they had Beth Lacey at the Women's Centre. Mary was the only one who had made significant contacts with women in other Canadian RCCs. Through participation in several conferences, she met and got to know women from other RCCs. Mary was familiar with the RCC's relationship with CASAC and was more aware than most of the women I interviewed of the national scene of rape crisis work. Mary's involvement with the RCC came to an end in the late 1980s. This was largely due to personal feelings of being excluded and ignored

by women she had grown to respect and trust within the women's community in St. John's. She felt she could not remain at the RCC, or involved in the women's community in St. John's any longer. Her negative experience was not with or at the RCC however, and her responses during the interview generally indicated positive feelings associated with the RCC.

Mary Aylward

Now in her late 70s Mary doesn't remember much about the days when she volunteered at the RCC. From her description, Mary was a volunteer very early on, probably in the 1970s. Mary decided to volunteer her time to a good cause and chose the RCC. The night of the meeting was "her night" and she got away from the house and family for an evening. Of all other volunteers there at the time, Mary only remembered Diane Duggan by name and identified her as the "co-ordinator." Mary wanted to offer her time and services to women who had been raped. She was much less interested in feminist analysis of rape or the organisation of the group. She went to meetings but she said she did not want to be a part of decision or policy-making. Mary was one of the two women who did not identify with being "feminist." She did not want her involvement to entail anything more than the time she offered on the crisis line and her attendance at meetings. With a family of seven children and a shop to run, Mary said she just did not have the time to invest. She thought that her friends at the time probably did not see the necessity of a crisis line for rape victims or understood why she volunteered there, but since she wanted

to do it, they were supportive, as were her brothers and husband.

Cathy Duke

Cathy was working towards a Social Work degree at Memorial University of Newfoundland and was placed with the Women's Centre as part of her internship in the late 1970s. She worked at the Women's Centre two days a week under the guidance of Iris Kirby, a woman who worked in the Secretary of State office. At the Women's Centre, Cathy learned about the RCC and worked with Diane Duggan on a regular basis. When Cathy graduated, and was working as a social worker, she returned to the RCC signing on as a volunteer for about two years.

Cathy said her experiences at the RCC got her thinking about her role in the world, "who I was and where I wanted to be" (Duke). Being exposed to feminist philosophy opened her eyes to a lot of things – "it really changed my whole life" (Duke). She said it was an interesting time to be at the RCC. She felt very comfortable there. She remembers all volunteers as doing their best and working co-operatively.

Today, Cathy still subscribes to a feminist philosophy. She is aware that how she manages the women working for her differs from their previous managers. She wants to ensure that she treats women fairly and has found that her staff comments favourably on her abilities as a manager, due to her philosophy.

Beth Lacey

Beth was not an official volunteer of the RCC but worked closely with the RCC when she was co-ordinator of the NSWC Women's Centre from 1983-1987. For a couple of years, when Beth was co-ordinator, she took crisis calls on the RCC phone while she was in the office during regular business hours. After 5:00 p.m. one of the two volunteers came in to answer the crisis phone or it was forwarded to a home number. When new volunteers came, Beth helped out with the training sessions. She described the relationship between the RCC and WC as symbiotic. She believed the rape crisis centre took a lot of pressure off the Women's Centre that would likely have been the recipient of rape crisis calls, if the RCC was not available. The Women's Centre reciprocated by housing the RCC and giving in-kind donations, such as access to a photocopier and use of the back office.

Beth is one of the few people who did not say that her rape crisis work took a toll on her. Calls to the crisis line between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. were not frequent and were scattered between happier moments. Working at the Women's Centre can take a toll, she said, but there are happy times and bad times. Beth believed that dealing with rape crisis calls exclusively, however, is different because, "considering how long it takes women to deal with it effectively, you often do not see them turn around" (Lacey). She recognised how draining it could be constantly taking calls from victims of sexual assault, which no doubt influenced her decision to help out.

Pam Thomas

Pam was attending Memorial University of Newfoundland in the mid-1980s. In a Women's Studies course she was taking, the professor offered partial course credit for volunteering at a feminist organisation. Pam went to the Women's Centre without knowing anything about the organisation. The woman she spoke to at the Women's Centre directed her to the Rape Crisis Centre, which was looking for volunteers.

Pam started volunteering in 1985 with a group of six or seven others. She was one of the few volunteers who were involved with the RCC for many years, staying until 1990. In the beginning she did not see it as particularly stressful as the more senior volunteers took more responsibility. As time went on though, and she became one of the more senior people around, it was more stressful. In 1989, she and one other volunteer took over the RCC. After several months of passing the beeper and total responsibility for the crisis line back and forth between the two of them, Pam was exhausted. When they got a group together and trained new volunteers, Pam stopped volunteering. She went back again in the early 1990s and stayed for one more year.

Pam recalled a lot of consciousness-raising during her time at the RCC. The process of sharing responsibilities and credit has remained a very salient feature for her and she stated that she would not trade her experience with the RCC for anything. She learned a lot from the women who called the crisis line and with whom she met. She feels that the experience prepared her for the career path she was about to take. Janet Lee Chafe mentioned Pam as one of the "pioneers," someone Janet had a great deal of respect

and admiration for (Chafe).

Janet Lee Chafe

Janet traced her first connection to the RCC back to when she was a resident at Iris Kirby House in the late 1980s. Janet's husband was abusive and after he was arrested numerous times an off-duty police officer called Janet at home one night and told her about a shelter for women in St. John's. Janet went to Kirby House and while there, learned about the Women's Centre. At the time, the RCC and the Women's Centre were still intimately connected and Janet learned more about the RCC as she became involved with the Women's Centre.

When Janet participated in training, she was one of four or five other new volunteers. As she understood it, there were only three volunteers at the time and one was leaving. So, in her year or so there, there were six volunteers in total. Janet's feelings of group cohesion and belonging were obvious. Throughout the interview, she always referred to the RCC as "we" and "us." The problems she talked about were in terms of "our" issues. Janet remembered the members of the group being very comfortable with each other. She shared her experience of being in an abusive relationship with the other members. Even though she felt that some volunteers were more committed than she was, she felt supported and valued. Janet remembered that the volunteers were respectful of each other's time. Even though "you could ask someone to cover your turn," she said, "you wouldn't want to take advantage of people" (Chafe). Similarly,

when she decided to leave the RCC she “... felt bad for putting extra burden on [the rest of the volunteers]” (Chafe).

Looking back, Janet was grateful for having the chance to volunteer at the RCC. She felt like she was at a stage in her life when she needed to do something different. She admitted there were some self-serving reasons for being there. “I was a victim of spousal abuse which was very traumatic and very severe. I found it was therapeutic for me. I wanted to move in new directions, I was looking to empower me, to find me.” She felt good helping the women who called and enjoyed her time as a RCC volunteer.

Role of Lesbians in Anti-Violence Work and the RCC

Lesbians have played a major role in the anti-violence movement in Canada. Becki Ross has described some of the history of lesbian feminist organising in Canada in her book, The House that Jill Built, which focuses on Toronto. In St. John's, lesbians have been at the forefront of the women's movement, leading women's organisations in the community. In their essay, “Lesbian Life in a Small Centre: The Case of St. John's,” Sharon Stone and the Women's Survey Group write that although most lesbians in St. John's do not seek involvement in politically active organisations, those who do often go to “a feminist organisation, such as the St. John's Women's Centre” (96). Lesbians were heavily involved in establishing Transition House, and later Iris Kirby House, both shelters for abused women. Lesbians also played a major role in bringing the Morgentaler clinic to St. John's, making abortion more accessible to the women of Newfoundland and

Labrador. In a focus group designed to discuss responses to a survey about lesbians and their lives in St. John's, one woman said that "lesbians are the backbone of the feminist community [in St. John's]" (Stone 100).

It is fairly obvious why lesbians are involved in the women's movement and women's community, since as women, they too will benefit from equal status with men. Lesbian women might have chosen to work and identify with the women's liberation movement with the understanding that their fate as lesbians was inextricably tied to the fate of all women (Stone 18). Being active in a women's organisations might also have been safer than organisations that were explicitly for the gay and lesbian population. Looking at the particular issues that were associated with radical feminism though, one might wonder why lesbians are at the forefront of the pro-choice and anti-violence movements. In Newfoundland and Labrador, two prominent lesbian feminists were widely known as spokeswomen on abortion for years. Why are lesbians involved in this work, when it could be argued, that abortion is not an issue for women who live lesbian lifestyles? Can a similar question be asked about work in the anti-rape movement? Statistics have shown that men perpetrate the vast majority of sexual assaults. Most often, the perpetrator is a man known to the victim and with whom she has had or is in a relationship. I asked one of the lesbian women I interviewed why she, as a lesbian, became involved in anti-rape work, pointing out that by nature of having a relationship with a woman, she has in fact probably lessened the chances that she will be raped. She responded that although that is the case, her gender still makes her vulnerable to rape. As

a lesbian, in fact, she has a greater chance of being affected by rape as her female partner is also at risk.

The link between lesbians and the anti-violence movement might have more to do with the theory associated with the movement, rather than the "anti-violence" aspect. Radical feminism, which is largely considered the feminism of the anti-violence movement could have been the most compatible or attractive form of feminism for lesbians. Radical feminism was about control of one's body and the eradication of sex role stereotyping. Sharon Stone wrote that "sexual orientation is about the right to love, as much as it is about the right to control one's body," which is a feminist issue (Stone 227). Lesbians, it could be argued, embodied the principles of radical feminism in their rejection of the most pervasive sex role, the female sexual partner of the male or heterosexuality. Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love wrote that the common enemy of feminists and lesbians is sexism, as sexism emerges from the focus on the reproductive role of sex between men and women (Abbott and Love 312). Sex that is not a potential reproductive activity then is prohibited. Taking even the most minimal definitions of lesbianism and feminism, Anne Koedt wrote, you can find one major point of agreement: biology does not determine sex roles (Koedt 249).

According to some women who volunteered in the 1980s, discussions about sexuality were frank and open. Volunteers who were there earlier though, said it was not something that was talked about or addressed. The women who started the NSWK back in the 1970s were for the most part married women and lesbianism was not a topic

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152

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RCC, she was not out, and thought that she and her partner were the only two lesbians in St. John's. At the RCC she felt accepted and affirmed in her lifestyle. Another participant indicated that the Women's Centre was a place lesbians might go in hopes of meeting other lesbians.

Part of the training for new volunteers centred on homophobia and heterosexism to ensure volunteers could talk freely and without prejudice to a gay or lesbian caller. Discussions also revealed and challenged prejudices based on sexuality, so that the volunteers could work together. Volunteers were asked directly how they felt about lesbianism and sometimes, how it felt to be sitting next to a lesbian.

Two lesbian women that I interviewed said that lesbians' contribution to the RCC and the women's movement needs to be acknowledged and documented as integral part of lesbian history and lesbian work. Another woman I interviewed, who identified as lesbian, thought that singling out lesbians and their contributions was unnecessary since they all did the same work. Another of the women I interviewed said that when she was a volunteer, she never really thought of herself as a lesbian doing women's work, but as a woman, doing work for women. To one heterosexual woman, who volunteered at a time when four of the other five volunteers were lesbian, "[sexuality] simply didn't matter."

In doing research like this, the contribution of lesbians should not only be noted for its own sake, but attempts should also be made to look at how lesbianism impacts the feminist activist's experiences. For the lesbians in this particular organisation, it appears that sexuality might have been related to the level of their involvement or their position

within the organisation. Lesbian women devoted more time to the organisation and emerged as leaders – the ones other volunteers looked to for help. One of the lesbian women I interviewed pointed out that if you look for who stuck around the longest and who did the work – it was lesbians. It is possible that there were other volunteers who were lesbian but not leaders. Lack of documentation and difficulty interviewing all volunteers mean that this cannot be determined. No doubt there is still much lesbian history to be documented as a first step to a more thorough account of lesbian women's work.

Conclusion

Nearly all of the women I interviewed identified positive aspects of being involved with the RCC. Some of the women felt bad for leaving the RCC even after years of volunteering. This brings to mind the question of how long they thought they should remain involved. Janet was the only one who had a time frame in mind when she started volunteering. She was aware that in exchange for the extensive training, the RCC expected each volunteer to stick around for a year, which Janet believed was fair. This kind of "contract" might have made it a little easier for Janet when, after a year, she decided to quit. The non-hierarchical organising was a salient feature of the RCC for all participants and whether they acknowledged differences in power or not, they all felt that their input was valued.

If the RCC was consistent with the literature on feminist theory and the women's movement, the women involved in this anti-rape organisation would be radical feminists.

Of the ten women I have introduced in this chapter, seven considered themselves feminist. Only one used the term 'radical feminist' in referring to herself, and other informants offered that they believed Diane Duggan considered herself a radical feminist. It appears though that generally the women did not consider themselves radical. Nor did they fit the radical feminist profile. Not all the volunteers had the feminist analysis of violence against women. Not all women saw the bigger picture, or the supposedly larger goal of eradicating sexual assault. In its focus on helping victims the RCC itself was not considered radical. As stated in Chapter Four, the RCC does not fit neatly into the category of radical feminist organisation.

My research uncovered more questions relating to the involvement and contribution of lesbian women in the women's movement in Newfoundland and in the RCC. Further investigation is needed into how sexuality influences feminist activists' experiences and how lesbians negotiate their identity in a women's community that is not always lesbian-friendly. These types of analyses will prove very relevant to the history of the women's movement in St. John's and beyond.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

My first goal in writing this thesis was to document the work of the RCC and to explore the experiences of women who volunteered there. I believed it was important, not only for the present-day RCC, but for everyone to see the work that these women have done on volunteer time and efforts. I hoped that this research would provide present and future rape crisis workers with a “past” or a “legacy” that would help the RCC and other groups in the future. Feminist organisations continue to struggle for resources and funding to survive. I hoped that in some way documenting the work done by women volunteers would bring credibility and validity to the work, providing a reason why the general population, policy-makers and government should acknowledge and appreciate what women activists have done.

I did not always have knowledge of something called a “women’s movement” and I remember being amazed when I started to uncover the stories of women fighting for the rights I came into so easily. Young women today may not fully appreciate the presence and work of local women’s centres and a provincial crisis line for rape victims, as these services have always been there in their lifetime. The women who were involved in starting these up, however, remember the dedication, commitment and struggle involved. I believe there are many in our province who do not yet realise that women have provided most of the contributions for these services, not governments, and that women have had to fight to keep these places operational. The women who established the RCC have provided a service specifically for victims of sexual assault, giving callers the information

they need and assisting them in dealing with the aftermath. The RCC made a very large contribution towards changing society's perceptions about sexual violence, especially around the issue of child sexual abuse.

When I first envisioned what my thesis would look like, it resembled Chapter Four: an outline and description of the activities of the RCC; what the volunteers had done. Established in 1977, the RCC grew into an independent organisation that has lasted, in one form or another, for more than two decades. Focussing on the crisis line as the best way to assist victims, the RCC has become well-known in the community as *the* anti-rape organisation. The St. John's RCC followed the pattern of other Canadian rape crisis centres in joining CASAC and in its basic premises and philosophies.

Another goal of mine was to look further than the organisation to the individuals that made up the RCC. What did they remember about their days with the RCC? Nearly all of the women I interviewed spoke very positively about their experiences. Being part of the RCC meant being part of a group that did important work. The sense of group belonging was as important and meaningful to the women I interviewed as their work on the crisis line. In fact, considering that calls were not frequent, and that most volunteer time was spent working with other volunteers or doing tasks unrelated to the crisis line, it is not surprising that few talked at length about actual crisis counseling. Feminist philosophy and concepts such as non-hierarchical organising were prominent in the participants' recollections of the RCC. Lastly, I wanted to evaluate the RCC against the description of radical feminism.

Was the RCC a Radical Feminist Organisation?

Using categories and labels to describe the movement does not always allow for an accurate representation of groups or individuals (see Wine and Ristock). The RCC (1977-1990) was a feminist organisation that focussed on men's violence against women and named the oppression of women, in a society that condoned and perpetuated misogyny, as the root cause of this violence. Congruent with the literature, it was an organisation that excluded men and established a women-run service to compensate for the lack of services provided by the state. At times the RCC rejected the idea of being government-funded. It appeared to be a radical feminist organization much like those described by writers as typical anti-violence feminist groups.

However, aspects of the RCC challenged a radical designation. The RCC worked with the police and the medical professions regularly. There are accounts of applying for funding but not securing it. Also the RCC operated out of a state-funded Women's Centre. Within the RCC, a split seemed to develop between the consciousness of the group and their work together within the confines of the RCC and the work they did in public and on the crisis line. If members had a radical approach to the issue of violence against women, they did not explicitly reveal it to the women who called. Although the Take Back the Night march can be viewed as a radical action because it involved loud protests and excluded men, the model of crisis intervention adopted by the RCC involved listening, being non-judgemental and giving information as requested, which is not associated with radical ideals. The only thing radical about the crisis intervention model

was the notion that women needed to understand they were not to blame. Sexual assault was (and is) a common occurrence in this society which indicates a deep-rooted societal problem.

Organisations are fluid entities. It can be argued that the RCC changed over time to become more separatist and autonomous, traits associated with radical feminism. In the 1970s, the RCC worked closely with the NSWC, which was government-funded. As a committee of the NSWC, the RCC reported back to the Council on its work. There was an interest in and search for government funding for the RCC. During the 1980s though, the RCC became more distant from, and operated independently of, the NSWC. The Take Back the Night march was started in 1984 and the women involved in the 1980s remember resistance to the idea of state funding and no attempts to secure it. It might be more fitting then to ask whether the RCC was radical at particular points in time.

The exploration of whether the RCC fits into a radical framework provides an example of how labels are socially and contextually constructed. According to the literature, the NSWC Women's Centre would fit more with the "liberal" feminist groups in its goals and mandates. Founded to ensure that the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women report would be implemented, the organisation's goals were already defined by a liberal document. To the women who were there and in the view of most of the residents of St. John's at the time, however, these women were radical in their actions. Arguably, to expend energy in the women's movement in the 1970s in St. John's was itself a radical action. Even other Canadian Women's Centres

viewed the St. John's Centre as radical, due to its public pro-choice stance. As Beth Lacey pointed out, in society's view it was the Women's Centre women who were the radicals, as they were fighting for women's rights.

This brings into question the usefulness of such categories as radical for the purposes of this thesis. Radical feminism is a term that originated from American feminists and preceded CASAC and the RCC. The RCC was established within the context of a national Canadian movement, but the characteristics of this particular part of the movement were dependent upon the women in St. John's who pushed the movement forward, as well as the political climate in the city and province. Since these factors are always changing, we cannot expect an organisation which operates within that climate to remain static. Theory is often associated with academics, as well, and not necessarily with activists. In my research, I believe using the framework of radical feminism helped me formulate ideas about what to investigate. However, it is clear that the RCC does not fully fit that category.

One strong theme that comes out of this research is the discrepancy between theory and practice, between idealism and reality. Creating categories and fairly distinct theories might be useful to the academic and for academic purposes, however when the researcher delves into the feminist activist world, these terms might acquire new or expanded meanings. Over time, the interpretation and meanings change, so that my questions and descriptive terms about feminism in St. John's have different meanings today than they did twenty years ago.

Comment on Other findings

Structure of Feminist Organisations

Studying the structure and process of this organisation highlights the gap between the ideology and reality. Although many feminist groups strive toward rejecting the hierarchical model our society is based on, they often recreate the power imbalance. Denial of privilege, and one's place in a hierarchy, is one of the most basic and real forms of abuse of power. Women coming together and fighting for a common cause, each giving equally and collecting equal credit is the ideal. In reality though, not all women are able or inclined to "give" to the same extent. We have different strengths and weaknesses and we are in unequal positions in terms of what society values and what access we have to resources. Feminists have sometimes held that collectivity and non-hierarchical organising is necessary, or else we re-create the inequality that we come together to resist and fight. Is such organising even possible? This concept of how much women should "give" can result in feelings of guilt and anxiety when they cannot give more, like when volunteers in the RCC decided to limit or end their involvement. Despite the fact that only one participant identified an external pressure to give everything she could, I believe most volunteers felt the pressure to remain involved to prevent more work being taken on by other volunteers.

The Contribution of Lesbians

One example of inequality within the women's movement has been, and still is, our reluctance to acknowledge and celebrate the range of human sexualities. Even in 2001, it was not always safe for lesbians to come out, let alone criticise other women for silencing them, especially within the women's movement. I am surprised now at my shortsightedness in not seeing the relevance of lesbian involvement in the RCC from the very beginning. This certainly points to how researcher assumptions influence the end product. This also points to the invisibility of lesbians in the history of the women's movement, and in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Relationship Between the Women's Centre and the Rape Crisis Centre

The relationship between the Women's Centre and the RCC is an important aspect of the history of both organisations. I did not intend to discuss this relationship, but during my research, I realized that it would be quite difficult to examine the development of the RCC without considering its very significant relationship with the NSWC. Tensions arose between the organisations that seemed to stem from the NSWC's concern that the RCC was not accountable to anyone for the work being done, and possibly concern that Diane Duggan was reluctant to bring anyone else into the RCC. Exchanges between the organisations seemed to focus on the request of the NSWC that new volunteers be brought in, if they were going to help the RCC get through difficulties such as paying bills. These reasons are not explicitly stated or documented. Although I sensed frustration at

times and noted that certain procedures were documented (e.g., “a letter will be sent”) the actual issues were not anywhere for perusal or deliberation. Have these problems continued? Are they issues that women in these groups continue to proliferate, and if so, is that a consequence of never airing out debates and disagreements that we can learn from?

The reluctance of the NSWCC to document its concerns fully illustrates a common fear among feminist organisations that if we present our problems within the feminist community to the outside world, we will be further marginalised. As women, we have learned that there is strength in numbers and solidarity. If we publicly criticise one another, the strength and power that comes from a cohesive movement will be lost. The danger, of course is that if we do not openly address issues of power, privilege and marginalisation within the feminist community, we do recreate the structures we claim to oppose and we do not learn how to deal with problems that arise as a result.

Reflections

One important thing I learned in doing this research is that histories and herstories are so much more complex than listing chronological milestones or brief descriptions of activities. People’s emotions and experiences cannot be separated out from the facts. Some of the women I interviewed were very personally involved with the RCC and they had emotional attachments both to the Centre and their role as volunteers. The women who agreed to be interviewed really opened up and were quick to tell me things “off the

record” even though we had just met. I have also learned that there is not one story, or one truth. There are many truths and many experiences that “accurately” represent the RCC. My naive intention was to gather, organise and analyse the facts. I realize now that there are no facts outside of interpretation and experience. For example, the death of Diane Duggan affected every person who was at the RCC. In a vain attempt at being objective, I did not encourage discussion about Diane Duggan in my interviews. On some level I feared it would amount to gossiping, which I refused to participate in. I had already felt very intrusive from investigating her life while she had no control over it. Diane Duggan’s death, however, was a huge piece of what people remember about the RCC and the women’s community in St. John’s. If I truly allowed participants to speak about what they wanted, I think there would have been much more discussion and information about how these women experienced and remembered Diane’s death. Listening to this would have given me another look into how women are affected by the actions of someone they respect and work with, especially within a women’s organisation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Questions arose in my research that require much deeper consideration than I could give in this project. Questions of unequal distribution and use of power within feminist organisations and the experiences of lesbian women in the RCC are two areas that require further investigation. The relationships between feminist organisations in St. John’s and within the province would be a worthy and interesting research project.

I have not investigated the impact of class on the women in the RCC and between the members of the RCC and the NSWC. The implications of class within the broader context of the women's movement in St. John's also warrant research and analysis. Middle and upper class women have certainly had more advantages in terms of having the financial means to work for little or nothing. If, as Wendy Williams put it, you were expected to give all you could, then rich women could afford to give more in terms of money and time.

How would this thesis be different if an outsider had researched and written it? Despite attempts to leave interviews open-ended, I did direct the conversation and thereby imposed my view about what was important. I also shared my thoughts and experiences of being a RCC volunteer, which might have influenced the participants' responses. How would it be different if an insider wrote it? If one of the women who had been around in those days set out to narrate the story of the RCC, what would she remember and ask questions about? My age and experience have influenced this project greatly. Under thirty, I lack the perspective of someone who lived through the 1970s and 1980s women's movements, which were times of great change for women within the province. This context I can only read about and try to recreate.

I have only interviewed women who came forth to participate and for the most part, had a lot of positive things to say about the RCC. There were women who left the RCC. What changed their minds? What about the volunteers who did not feel a sense of belonging? It would be very interesting to hear from women who decided to leave after

training. On the other end of the crisis line, how did the women callers feel about the RCC? Did they really feel helped and respected, as was the goal of the RCC? In a bigger sense, did the RCC make a difference? Evaluating the work of the RCC appears to be almost impossible without the input from women who called the crisis line, as there are no records or documentation to analyze.

Were rape crisis centers successful? As early as 1977, Lorraine Clark wrote that the impact of rape and the subsequent turmoil associated with reporting it had been considerably lessened by the establishment and work of rape crisis centers (13). In her response to my interview questions, Ruth Roach Pierson pointed out that I had not asked whether the work of RCCs helped to change society's view of rape. She went on to say that she believes that RCCs have helped to change societal attitudes to some extent. While jokes about rape are not so common or acceptable today, there is still a long way to go in understanding and communicating the power dynamic of sexual assault and acknowledging the discriminatory attitudes we have about rape when it comes to race and class (Pierson).

Finally, there is an obvious gap in this research in terms of the time period. What happened after 1990? Diane Duggan was such an influential part of the RCC, it would be very interesting to examine how the organisation changed with her absence. The ongoing relationship between the RCC and the NSWCC into the 1990s needs to be investigated. What were the circumstances surrounding the physical split between the Women's Centre and the RCC? In more recent times, how was the decision reached to apply for

government funding and how has that funding affected the RCC or the Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre Inc. as it is now known?

This thesis should not be considered as the last word on the RCC and its membership. There are so many more women who either were affected by or influenced the development of the RCC. Their experiences and thoughts need to be documented as well. I consider this a first step toward a more critical look at the RCC, its mandate and its volunteers. It offers a base from which to start our analysis of the RCC and its place in the herstories of the feminist movement and in the feminist community of St. John's.

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APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT-VOLUNTEER TIMELINE

	late 1970s	early 1980s	mid-1980s	late 1980s
Diane Duggan	x	x	x	x
Wendy Williams	x			
Ruth Pierson	x			
Mary Doyle	x	x	x	x
June Petton	x	x		
Mary Aylward	x			
Cathy Duke	x	x		
Beth Lacey		x	x	
Pam Thomas			x	x
Janet L. Chafe				x

APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Lynn Hartery
Women's Studies, MUN
St. John's, NF

September 25, 2000

Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women
131 LeMarchant Rd
St. John's, NF
A1C 2H3

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lynn Hartery and I am a graduate student in the Women's Studies Program at Memorial University of Newfoundland. As part of the Master's program, I am writing a thesis called *The St. John's Rape Crisis Center and the Women Who Made it Happen*. I am interested in interviewing women who were involved with the RCC before 1990, particularly women who were involved in the establishment of the RCC in the 1970's.

If you or someone you know was involved with the RCC and might be interested in being part of this important project, please contact me at the addresses below or pass on the relevant information to anyone who might be interested. All responses will be kept confidential. I am also including a brief advertisement/poster that I hope you will post in your office and include in any newsletters or bulletins.

This project is being supervised by Dr. Linda Kealey (History Dept, MUN) and Dr. Diane Tye (Folklore Dept, MUN) and has already been approved by the Women's Studies Graduate Committee and the University's Ethics Committee.

Sincerely,

Lynn Hartery

Lynn Hartery	MWS Candidate	738-7739	lynn85@hotmail.com
Dr. Linda Kealey	Dept of History	737-8420	lkealey@morgan.ucs.mun.ca
Dr. Diane Tye	Dept of Folklore	737-4457	dtye@morgan.ucs.mun.ca

APPENDIX 3: NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

Master's of Women's Studies student at Memorial University of Newfoundland interested in interviewing women who were involved with the St. John's Rape Crisis Center before 1990 as part of thesis research. If you are interested in participating in this project, please email Lynn at lynn85@hotmail.com or call 738-7739. All responses will be kept confidential. (Gazette, 5 October 2000: Classifieds)

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM

Lynn Hartery has taken on this research project, under the direction of supervisors Dr. Linda Kealey and Dr. Diane Tye in order to record and document the activities and philosophies of the Rape Crisis Center from its establishment around 1977 up to 1990. This research will be credited toward a Master's in Women's Studies degree from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

My participation will involve being interviewed for approximately 1-2 hours by the researcher about my experiences with the St. John's Rape Crisis Center. I understand that the researcher would like to record the interview by means of audio-taping and/or taking notes. I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions I wish, as well as end the interview at any time. I understand that there will be an opportunity, should I wish it, for me to review what the researcher has written about my involvement and recollection of the RCC. Any disagreements will be noted and included in the final paper. I understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time during the research phase by notifying the researcher.

I am aware copies of the document arising from the thesis research will be given to the Queen Elizabeth II Library and the present-day Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Center. I understand that the researcher would like to make the taped interviews and final document accessible to the community by depositing them at the Provincial Archives.

1. I give permission to the researcher to audiotape the interview. **YES / NO**
2. I give permission to the researcher to deposit recorded information to an archival organization. **YES / NO**
3.
 - a) I give permission for the researcher to use my name and refer to contributions as mine within the paper. **YES / NO.**
 - b) If NO, I understand that all necessary measures will be taken to protect my identity. This may include omitting some information from my interview if it is deemed as identifying information. **YES / not applicable**
4. I would like the opportunity to review for accuracy any direct quotations attributed to me in the research paper. **YES / NO**
5. I understand that if there are concerns that cannot be resolved with the researcher, Lynn Hartery, they can be discussed with her supervisors: Dr. Linda Kealey, Dept. of History, MUN: 737- 8420 (lkealey@morgan.ucs.mun.ca) or Dr. Diane Tye, Dept. of Folklore, MUN: 737-4457 (dtye@morgan.ucs.mun.ca). **YES / NO**

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Researcher:

Date:

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. When did you first think that a RCC was needed or that you would be willing to offer your time at the RCC?
2. When did you become involved with the RCC? How long were you involved?
3. What was your first experience with the RCC, i.e. when did you hear about it or think about being part of the RCC? If you were part of the establishment of the RCC, when did the planning start and what can you remember about those first meetings? Who was involved?
4. What did you do to contribute the RCC? What was your role? What activities did you take part in? (phone line, fund-raising, applying for funds, meetings, Take Back The Night marches?)
5. What were the short-term goals of the RCC? What was the main purpose of the organization? What was the philosophy? Did you also subscribe to that philosophy?
6. Did you consider yourself a feminist then? Was the organization feminist?
7. Can you describe some of your experiences as part of the RCC? Positive, negative, most vivid...?
8. What kind of relationship was established between the Women's Center and the RCC? Did this change over time?
9. What kinds of relationships were established with other groups? What sorts of reactions did you get? Other women's groups? Political groups? Community groups?
10. How did being part of the RCC affect your life at the time? Looking back, what was the effect of being part of that group?
11. Personally: how did your family and friends react to your being part of the RCC? How did it affect relationships with family? Work?
12. There are few documents from the early days of the RCC? Why do you think that is?
13. Were volunteers recruited? How did you organize yourselves?

14. Under what circumstances did you leave the RCC?
15. As a group, what barriers did you face financially, socially? Personally, what barriers did you face being part of this organization? Time constraints? Family obligations? Work responsibilities?

APPENDIX 6: CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE RCC¹

16 November 1972	official date of start of NSWC organization
30 March 1977	visit from Joanie Vance, National coordinator for National Association of Rape Crisis Centers, gave information about setting up RCC
4 April 1977	question of RCC raised at NSWC meeting
?? April 1977	first meeting for those interested in rape crisis
18 May 1977	Diane Duggan had contacted police re: rape crisis facilities
25 May 1977	minutes note time to decide whether or not to set up rape crisis center
8 June 1977	Rape crisis meeting scheduled
28 June 1977	RCC meeting
6 July 1977	Rape crisis answering service would be \$50.00/month
1 July 1977	(logbook) Diane Duggan wrote to other RCCs to gather information about rape.
13 July 1977	RCC meeting scheduled: minutes note that contact had been made with police, medical professionals and information gathered about what to expect
19 July 1977	(logbook) reference made to a "rape crisis file" kept at the Women's Center
25 July 1977	(logbook) RCC meeting scheduled
8 August 1977	(logbook) RCC meeting; five women attended
11 August 1977	(logbook) inquiry from <u>The Evening Telegram</u> about RCC

¹This information is from the minutes of the NSWC, unless otherwise indicated and only includes information prior to 1990.

- 25 August 1977 (logbook) There is note indicating that a member had put information into the RCC file. Originally, it was written, "put in Diane's file." This was scratched out and replaced with "put in RCC file."
- 26 August 1977 (logbook) Again reference made to "Diane's file."
- 19 September 1977 Crown prosecutor guest speaker at meeting to speak about court procedure
- 23 September 1977 article in Evening Telegram on NSWC, "The Goal Remains Constant." No mention of RCC
- 17 October 1977 (logbook) RCC meeting; guest speaker was a police officer
- 24 October 1977 (logbook) RCC meeting scheduled
- 3 November 1977 (logbook) inquiry noted from reporter at The Evening Telegram as to whether there was a RCC in St. John's. Forwarded to Diane Duggan
- 14 November 1977 AGM report "attempts to set up a rape crisis center"
- 23 November 1977 rape crisis committee established
- 14 December 1977 lots of publicity for rape crisis. Diane Duggan got her "first rape case this morning" Still in no way ready for a 24-hour line
- 21 December 1977 RCC will be listed separately in the phone book, even though will still use the same number as Women's Center
- 18 January 1978 Diane Duggan had helped another client who came to the Women's Center. Attended a rape trial. She suggested that the Center protest if the victim's character continues to be attacked. Paula Wilson, regional representative of National Rape Crisis Centers will meet with Diane and other interested members Monday night
- 25 January 1978 report from meeting with Paula Wilson during which members reviewed proposal for contributions at the national level

- 1 February 1978 Diane reported that the RCMP had contacted her to say that they had reconsidered and will start showing Fred Storaska's film, "How to say No to a rapist and Survive" in Newfoundland
Diane reported that our last rape victim has ended her need for assistance and is OK
- 1 March 1978 One hundred dollars donated to the RCC from the Avalon Band Citizen Radio
- 15 March 1978 Article had appeared in Evening Telegram, "How Women's Lib Promotes Rape." Members decided to send replies from both RCC and NSWC
- 22 March 1978 (logbook) Diane received a call from the police requesting she go down to the station and speak to a rape victim
- 28 March 1978 (logbook) noted indicate arrangements being made for Diane Duggan to attend National Conference of Rape Crisis Centers
- 29 March 1978 decided that RCC will approach City Council for funds
- 7 April 1978 (logbook) prepared press release on rape laws
- 11 April 1978 (logbook) Rape crisis Center received \$1000.00 from City Council for a 24-hour crisis line
- 12 April 1978 Noted that members should make public statement re: necessary changes in Criminal Code regarding rape
- 27 April 1978 scheduled national conference of rape crisis centers
- 30 May 1978 RCC meeting scheduled
- 27 May 1978 "Day of Discussion" prompted by tensions within the NSWC and its members.
- 25 June 1978 Official opening of the NSWC Women's Center
- 13 July 1978 Rape Crisis line hooked up
- 19 July 1978 (logbook) RCC meeting scheduled

- 28 July 1978 (logbook) RCC arrange to get business cards printed
- 2 August 1978 (logbook) note from Diane Duggan saying that "from now on the RCC mail will be handled separately - in its own mail book. Whoever gets the mail should just put it to one side (in the RCC mail basket when we get one). There is also a logbook for the RCC. If anything comes up regarding RCC, please make sure it is written in this book as well."
RCC meeting scheduled
- 7 August 1978 Bonnie Kreps' film about rape shown at the Women's Center
- 17 August 1978 (logbook) question about how the RCC got started. Diane Duggan asks if anyone remembers, and could they "enlighten" her.
- 30 August 1978 Diane reported that Canada Works grant had been turned down
Project of documenting images of violence against women on magazine covers
- 6 September 1978 Diane and another member invited to speak to residents and interns at Janeway hospital about child sexual abuse.
- 6 September 1978 (logbook) beginning of calls from women in community who want to volunteer with RCC
- 9 October 1978 (logbook) "first rape crisis training session tonight. Thirteen people present." Diane Duggan
- 8 November 1978 Diane Duggan reported having been interviewed by OZ, Q Radio and Radio Noon
- 20 November 1978 6th annual AGM for NSWC: Diane Duggan gave a report on the Rape Crisis Center
- 14 January 1979 (logbook) Diane wrote, "Do not leave the back office unlocked. I hope this is our final request."
- 26 February 1979 (logbook) RCC meeting
- 11 June 1979 (logbook) RCC meeting

- ?? ??? 1979 RCC presented at a provincial workshop for Guidance Counselors
- 22 October 1979 RCC requesting to clarify relationship between the NSWC and the RCC. The specific issue of concern was whether the RCC need to bring correspondence, action plans and decisions to the NSWC executive. The RCC does not want to divorce from the NSWC but wants to know what needs to be brought to the NSWC and what does not. "What must be brought before the executive is not day-to-day business, but the responsibilities of the executive in terms of time, money, personnel, news releases, public announcements, requests for further funding, requests for feminist services, labor, etc. This will be taken back to the Center and discussed."
- 5 November 1979 the RCC proposed that they be affiliated but autonomous. This means they will make monthly reports on their operations to the NSWC, but they will be self-governing. Agreed that the RCC was neither a standing committee or a project of the NSWC, and that the two organizations are affiliated; the affiliation is by the consent of both groups. Therefore, the RCC is autonomous in its operation. Agreed RCC should use its own letterhead stationary and the RCC filing cabinet should be locked for confidential files. The back room will be made available generally, with the following priorities: emergencies and counseling, rape crisis center business, other business, including NSWC. The RCC phone will only be answered by RCC volunteers.
- 27 November 1979 RCC meeting
- 14 June 1982 Three summer positions filled with RCC
- 4 October 1982 Note in minutes of a member interested in organizing Take Back the Night march
- 7 February 1983 RCC phone taken out. Suggestions for how to raise money for RCC.
- 29 August 1983 Rape Crisis Training session set up for Beth and co-coordinator of Women's Center with Diane Duggan
- 25 September 1983 Other RCCs across Canada marching (for TBTN?). Possibility of RCC organizing one for St. John's

- 6 February 1984 RCC Grant application completed
- 18 June 1984 Motion carried to support member and Diane Duggan to start a Take Back the Night committee and organize a march for this year.
- 2 July 1984 more plans for TBTN noted, planned for 21 Sept 1984
- 8 October 1984 report that TBTN was a success, with about 140 participating in very wet conditions
- 22 April 1985 check into cost of a portable phone and Answer telephone service
- 22 July 1985 request from Diane Duggan for a loan of \$1600. From the SJSWC to RCC to pay for airfare for 5 members to attend a conference in PEI. Motion put forth and passed.
- 5 August 1985 plans for TBTN
- 3 September 1985 report that RCC members attended conference and found it very beneficial. Formal sharing of information to follow.
- 25 September 1985 appears that the 24-hour crisis line is not in operation. Indication that training and money are necessary.
- 2 December 1985 references to a RC Committee (believe this has been set up between RCC and NSWC) discussion about the conference in PEI and proposed a training session outline
- 24 May 1986 Possibility of a 24-hour line. Coordinator to contact Diane Duggan and request her presence at next NSWC meeting
- 27 July 1986 RCC will meet to discuss possibility of using an answering machine
- 29 September 1986 Training for RCC volunteers will begin the second week in October. The answering machine has been hooked up and gives the Women's center number. NSWC Women's Center staff will answer phone between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

- 1 December 1986 meeting with RCC about when Training would start. Interviews will happen between January 1 and January 15th, 1987 and training would start January 14 or January 21, 1987. Mary Doyle said that the Evening Telegram bill was paid and she and Diane would check into the mix-up.
- 5 January 1987 Rape Crisis Training to start Jan 15. Anne Donovan requests volunteers to help organise the interviews of applicants and set up the training program. Next meeting (of NSWC) will be on Jan 19. The topic will be Rape Crisis Centre Training, or if not, a letter-writing workshop.
- 27 January 1987 Anne Donovan frustrated with RCC Training, feels she is doing most of the work. Note that they still owe the NSWC \$1500.00 Motion to strike a committee for rape crisis and take over the responsibilities. There is unanimous approval. There will be a lunch meeting at the Women's Centre concerning rape crisis on Feb 2 with Diane Duggan, if she agrees to it.
- 9 February 1987 report from a meeting between 4 members of the NSWC and three members of the RCC. Training dates determined. \$1500 loaned to RCC. Diane said it was loaned to another women's centre but refused to divulge the amount loaned or to whom. Re: money from TBTN, NSWC asked for receipts and they would take off \$500 from amount owing. Diane thinks there is about \$750 remaining. Reference to a private meeting that was very emotional.
- NSWC have established a "Committee" that will meet with the RCC committee. This group appears to be a liaison between the two organisations. NSWC representatives asked to be part of the Rape Crisis Centre, but at another subsequent meeting (of the RCC only?) It was decided that this would not be acceptable.
- Correspondence planned: to send a letter asking for money owed and also to detail the position of the NSWC regarding interviews for trainees, which the NSWC opposes.
- 2 March 1987 Diane Duggan supplied the Steering Committee with a package re: concerns with NSWC and RCC liaison. NSWC feels that the needs of women in community are not being met. Motion made to set up NSWC 24 hour rape crisis service

- 16 March 1987 Anne D. reported back and suggested we try a mediator to work out the problems between RCC and NSWC. Ann Escott will write a letter to the RCC.
- 30 March 1987 Read Diane's reply to last letter sent. Several women are going to meet to draft a letter
- 28 April 1987 motion that a letter be sent to RCC stating that photocopying costs must be paid by RCC due to cutbacks. Decision made that the Rape Crisis situation needed to be fully discussed at a separate meeting and the final decisions about the RCC be made soon and discussed at the AGM
- 8 June 1987 There is still no 24-hour line. Discussion of level of involvement of social work students to Rape Crisis Committee. There is no reason why two services cannot exist and socila work students will collect information re: stats, and training programs. The Rape Crisis Committee will be here to carry it through
- (Logbook) First meeting of the Sexual Assault Volunteer Group took place and 5 women attended.
- 3 August 1987 RCC 24-hour line is being installed this week. Diane is looking for volunteers for Take Back the Night
- 17 August 1987 the 24-hour crisis line is installed. We no longer answer the crisis line during office hours. They have an answering service.
- 31 August 1987 Diane Duggan had not responded to a letter. The 24-hour crisis line has an answering service, there is always someone available. Trainees are sitting in on counselling sessions. When trainees feel ready to answer calls they will be on their own. There are 8-10 women who are answering calls.
- 13 October 1987 the possibility of a liaison person with RCC was discussed.
- 27 October 1987 Staff report: met with members of RCC and liaison. Discussion about role of liaison as a way to share information. Noted that NSWC are totally separate from the RCC. Get RCC in front of phone book. Jackie asked for a copy of their constitution.

- 24 November 1987 change in liaison person
- 2 February 1988 (noted for next meeting) issue of rape crisis files and a room for meetings and counselling
- 16 February 1988 the relationship between NSWC and RCC discussed. Decided there was no room for RCC workers to meet clients during the day. Discussed alternative places for RCC.
- 1 March 1988 No further communication with RCC re: alternate space. Liaison not present at meeting
- 7 June 1988 RCC had first one hour and ten minutes of meeting. Outlined that there were students at RCC who had no space to work, and request that the NSWC make space for them at women's Centre. Steering Committee decided to let the staff at Women's Centre make that decision
- 21 June 1988 RCC decided that it did not want to engage in a committee consisting of members of both NSWC and RCC at that time, but would reconsider it in the fall. Decision came back from staff that they were already strained beyond capacity. NSWC member will help RCC find other space.
- 13 September 1988 references to TBTN. NSWC will not be able to make a donation but are participating
- 11 October 1988 RCC, Iris Kirby House listed as groups that might support the NSWC's fight for more funding
- no date Annual report from RCC
- 1 February 1989 RCC has asked for a loan of \$300 to pay phone bill, otherwise their phone will be cut off. They have promised to pay it back by March 31. Approved.
- 27 April 1989 death of Diane Duggan
- 30 May 1989 Each committee member asked to chair a committee. Pat Balsom will chair RCC

- 27 June 1989 members of RCC exhausted. The answering service has been cut off, Jackie will answer the phone from 9:00- 5:00. There will be no 24-hour service. Suggested that the RCC get an answering machine to answer calls after hours. Also that she call a meeting of interested people to help out with the line until another training program could be run in the Fall
- 11 July 1989 Pam Thomas will chair TBTN Committee. Representative from Women's Centre will be Jackie B. The Centre will be using a pager instead of Answer Telephone so that after hours the answering machine will tell people to call the pager. This is much cheaper and will eliminate the need for people to stay at home near the phone. A new volunteer program will be starting in the fall. Volunteers should be ready to start the lines Jan 1. Application forms for the training program will be available at the Women's Centre
- 25 July 1989 RCC now using a beeper system and have 14 volunteer counsellors
- 8 August 1989 next newsletter will have an excerpt from Diane journal. There are 20-24 people interested in training. TBTN shirts are available for \$15.00 and Masonic temple has been booked for a party after the march
- 18 September 1989 reported that TBTN Committee had managed to make some money for next year's march. The training program will be on Wednesday nights at the Centre and will probably take 10-12 weeks. There are 6-9 women interested in taking the course
- 17 October 1989 Training program is well underway. Also stated there is an excellent possibility of funding from medical students
- 27 November 1989 the Rape Crisis Centre had received \$13 000.00 proceeds from medical students' Monte Carlo night



