WITHOUT A VOICE
A Study of Children Who Have Experienced Family Violence

by

Julie N. Carroll

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Julie N. Carroll 2000
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.

L’auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-50472-7
ABSTRACT

WITHOUT A VOICE
A Study of Children Who Have Experienced Family Violence

by

Julie N. Carroll

Master of Arts 2000

Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

This thesis was intended to study children who have experienced family violence and to learn if their voices are sufficiently heard in this issue.

Questionnaires were sent out to shelters and hostels across Ontario, and interviews with child advocates and two observations of children were done at selected facilities. Two experts were consulted concerning the findings in this thesis.

Five main themes, all grounded in the data collected, are presented in this study. They include children's behaviour, socialization, funding, programs and services, and cultural implications.

It was concluded that children are not heard from a societal perspective, but they are recognized by those who work with them. We need to hear these children's voices, and governments must put children on the political agenda through more funding so that qualified workers and ample resources are available to help children make the transition from violent to nonviolent environments.
To Robert B. Carroll, my late husband, who believed in and supported me in the writing of this thesis, but who sadly did not live to see its completion. I miss him profoundly.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research in this thesis could not have been completed without the support, critical analysis, acceptance, and patience of many individuals, including everyone in my family. Each of these individuals lent his or her unique advice and support and did so to inspire me with confidence and a special sort of encouragement when the going was difficult.

I particularly want to acknowledge my two professors, Dr. George Dei, thesis supervisor, and Dr. Kari Dehli, thesis committee member, who remained with me through many trials and tribulations. Their patience, insight, and critical analysis of sociological techniques have guided me through this research.

The experiences and observations of the children who have witnessed family violence encouraged me to pursue this work. These children allowed me to view their world, one that many may never see.

Other respondents also contributed their valuable time to answer questionnaires and review my findings, as well as submit to interviews. These individuals are professionals in the field of family violence and are to be commended for the difficult work they do. I greatly value their knowledge and expertise, as well as their willingness to share their experiences with me in this research.

Sincere thanks go to my stepson, Michael Carroll, a professional writer and editor. He not only edited this work, but has inspired and supported me for many years in my educational journey. Finally, I want to acknowledge Zbigniew "Big" Labedzki, a good friend and computer expert who helped me produce draft after draft of this thesis. His encouraging words when things were rough will always be remembered.
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii
INTRODUCTION 1
A Case Synopsis 1
BACKGROUND 6
Three Dimensions 6
Societal Dimension 7
Theoretical Dimension 9
Political and Economic Dimension 12
What Studies Exist on the Topic? 14
METHODOLOGY 19
The Questionnaire 19
Gaining Access to the Field 22
Observations 26
Interviews 27
Professionals Who Work with Children and Woman Abuse 29
The Process 30
The Study's Limitations 32
FINDINGS 36
Children's Behaviour 36
Socialization 45
Funding 52
Provision of Services 59
Cultural Implications 73
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHEDULES</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The issue of family violence is not a new or recent phenomenon. Spousal abuse has been a societal problem for centuries. In the past two to three decades, it has been addressed, particularly by Western society, as an adult problem. Violent behaviour between spouses has been criminalized, and victims of violence are able to seek safety in hostels or shelters, while counselling and other support services are offered for both the perpetrator and the victim.

However, my experience working in a hostel for 16 years has led me to believe that children who have suffered family violence are often ignored or not heard by those who work with them. In this study, I will demonstrate—through my research data, my experience, and the literature reviewed—the factors that indicate how children are left voiceless by the system and procedures that deal with family violence.

The children's parents, on the other hand, are provided with a range of community-based supportive services, such as counselling and security for abused women in shelters or hostels. The following case synopsis provides an example of how children are not acknowledged when it comes to family violence.

A Case Synopsis

I could cite many stories in which a mother comes to the hostel I work at with her children after being referred by another agency or brought in by the police. Sometimes such a mother simply approaches us on her own. Here, though, I will discuss one example that clearly demonstrates how children were not acknowledged and hostel staff were required to deal only with the mother.

This mother, who I will call Jane, came to the hostel with her five children after she was referred to us by another agency. The ages of Jane's children were five, four, and
three months. She also had two-year-old twins. As well, she had another pregnancy between the twins and the new baby, but had lost that child in the first trimester.

As a result of funding cuts, we no longer had a child-and-youth worker to assist us in this family's intake. Therefore, Jane was given priority and was taken with her children by the crisis counsellor to a private area where she could tell her story and have her experiences validated. The only thing we could do for the children was to provide them with food and something to drink so they would hopefully be quiet while Jane went through the intake procedure. The children had no opportunity to tell someone about their experiences and have them validated.

As Jane's story unfolded, it became clear that her spouse had maintained his power and control over her by keeping her pregnant. Several types of abuse, as well, were involved in this case.

In the beginning, the abuse was sexual. She was forced to participate in unwanted, unprotected sex, knowing she would get pregnant. However, with the birth of the last child, there were complications and Jane had to undergo a tubal ligation. No longer able to control Jane through pregnancies, Jane's husband resorted to psychological and physical violence. He would complain that Jane was no longer a woman because she was unable to have more children, and he would accuse her of having affairs with other men, thus making her feel guilty and leaving her with little or no self-esteem. As well, his abuse escalated to physical assault. When Jane arrived at the hostel, she had bruises and obvious pain from the last beating.

It was clear to us, as staff, that the children had witnessed this violence, especially since their behaviour displayed evidence of this. The two-year-old twins were in a double stroller, the baby was in Jane's arms, the five- and four-year-old children clung to their mother, a look of terror in their eyes, uncertain about what might happen next. All of the younger children were crying.
Not only were these children exhibiting emotional trauma as a result of their home environment, but there was also evidence of neglect. They were clad in tattered, poorly fitting clothes, had dirty, unkempt hair, and looked as if they could use baths and a good meal.

Children often feel that such situations are their fault. We often hear children as young as Jane's say that if only they had been good, Mommy and Daddy would not have been fighting. Someone needs to reassure them that such things are not their fault and explain to them that this is an adult problem.

In families in which violence exists, the abuse takes many forms, such as emotional, psychological, financial, sexual, and physical. In each family, the violence can be different, but one thing is common: the use of power and control of one spouse over the other.

Jane's story, and that of her children, is merely one example of what hostel and shelter workers hear every day. In some cases, children, such as Jane's, can be helped if a child-and-youth worker is available, but if there are no child advocates or counsellors when the family arrives, the children are left to endure their pain alone in silence.

What can be learned from Jane's story and that of her children? First, one can see the emotional and physical effects family violence can have on children. Jane's children were traumatized; the older ones clung to their mother, fearful about the future, while the younger ones cried. Jane, who had been badly abused emotionally and physically, lacked the energy to provide basic needs for her children, as indicated by their shabby clothing, obvious hunger, and unclean state.

Second, one can see how children can be forgotten victims of family violence. Jane was given priority by the crisis counsellor on duty. True, her children were provided with food and something to drink, but Jane was able to talk about her traumatic event and have it validated. Although it is important not to minimize the mother's suffering, it is equally crucial to address and acknowledge the experiences of the children.
Since family violence is seen as an adult problem, the victimization of children too often is ignored. Shelters and hostels recognize the need to provide support for these child witnesses, but they are frequently unable to do so, due to the lack or reduction of funding that only provides a few hours of "coverage" per day for children. I found from a questionnaire I distributed to hostels and shelters in Ontario that, on average, there are only 10.8 hours per day of service for children, compared to 24 hours per day for their mothers.

Finally, Jane's story provides us with a better understanding of what family violence is about. It is an issue in which one spouse victimizes the other spouse, utilizing certain tactics to maintain power and control. Originally, in Jane's case, her husband dominated her through sexual abuse, resulting in five pregnancies. After the birth of her fifth child, Jane had surgery to prevent further pregnancies, resulting in her husband turning to physical, psychological, and emotional forms of abuse to control his wife.

It is very sad to see children who have been traumatized by what they have witnessed. Therefore, I decided that children needed to be acknowledged as witnesses to and victims of family violence, and should be given some voice and recognition. Because I was not sure if the conditions that existed in my workplace, or examples such as Jane's, prevailed in all hostels and shelters, I embarked on this research to resolve some of my own questions and to test what had been to me, in the beginning, an empirical statement.

Each week, in my workplace, mothers who have been abused by their partners come into our hostel with their children hoping that we can fix their lives. We try, but with limited resources, both human and financial, very little can be done. As well, these mothers and their children can stay with us for only six to eight weeks. In many cases, they have witnessed or experienced family violence for several years. Crisis intervention for such a short period is a Band-Aid solution that merely provides the mother and children temporary respite and safety from a violent environment.
In this study, I seek to learn if children who have experienced or witnessed family violence are, in fact, not being heard. Since it is only my assumption that this may be true, it is my hope that the research I have conducted will confirm or dispel this conjecture.

Underlying this main question are a number of other concepts related to the issue of family violence that require answers. What exists in the current hostel/shelter service-delivery system for children who have experienced family violence? Are the present services for children in shelters and hostels adequate? And how are these services being delivered for these children? What is the importance of giving children who have experienced family violence some voice in this issue? If society continues to ignore these children, what might we expect from future generations who are the victims of family violence? Finally, what exists in Western shelter-and-hostel culture that perpetuates the cycle of family violence?
BACKGROUND

Three Dimensions

In the early stages of my research and study, I soon realized that the problem of children who have experienced or witnessed family violence was multidimensional. However, for the purpose of this thesis, I decided to restrict my discussion to three specific dimensions that I felt provided a suitable framework with which to understand the issue.

The first dimension is societal. As a society, we believe the family is an autonomous institution that should be able to deal with deviant behaviour within itself without outside interference.

The second dimension involves theory. When one talks to professionals in the field of family violence, or if one reviews what has been written about the subject, one discovers a complete range of ideas and theories. In the real world, it is difficult to assimilate into a single theory all that one hears or reads about family-violence victims, particularly when it concerns children.

A third dimension—political and economical—did not exist when I first undertook this study. Initially, I found that great strides had been made in the area of family violence, including an increase in shelters; greater public awareness about the issue across all societal institutions; expanded services for women and especially children, such as housing and counselling; and the proliferation of groups for men who batter. However, in 1995, after Ontario's new Conservative government, led by Premier Mike Harris, claimed a deficit in the billions and launched its Common Sense Revolution, the accomplishments of the 1970s were seriously undermined.
Societal Dimension

For centuries domestic violence was either condoned or tolerated by society. With the exception of a few isolated cases, the problem remained firmly within the walls of the family abode. It was only in the early 1970s that the issue became a greater topic of discussion within society as a whole. During that decade the women's movement made great strides, as did the push for shelters for battered women and children.

According to *Vis-a-Vis* (volume 7, number 3, 1989), a newsletter produced by the Canadian Council on Social Development, provincial governments in the early years of the shelter movement were reluctant to finance safe houses for abused women and children. Unfortunately, in 1989, this tendency was still quite evident, as demonstrated by *Vis-a-Vis* in the findings of a survey conducted through associations representing shelters for battered women and children across Canada. The newsletter reports that

Broader recognition of the problem by society is needed. Newfoundland said politicians, most of them men, do not consider wife assault a priority. In Nova Scotia, resistance by the Department of Community Services often produces delays of up to two years before requests are answered. In Saskatchewan, some politicians were said to be reluctant to organize awareness workshops for their members. In Quebec, government officials, people involved in the social-service network, and groups for batterers oppose the feminist approach. (p. 4)

The same survey also discovered that the prevalence of family violence is associated with the "inferiority and inequality of women in society," and that male power, "through custom, laws and attitudes," works to the "disadvantage of women." Furthermore, the study found that "our society views violence as an expression of anger rather than a means of gaining power or control," and that "batterers are not sick, frustrated people, who need to let off the steam in order to escape their personal problems—batterers are ordinary men" (p. 1).
With governments reluctant to assist families through adequate funding programs, and with a society that views family violence merely as an expression of anger or as a means of settling a conflict, it is not surprising that those working in the shelter movement have had so much difficulty making headway during the past 20 years.

A historical review of the literature on wife abuse helps to explain why at one time spousal assault was condoned without any form of social control. Old beliefs, attitudes, and values die hard and many remain with us today in terms of relationships and societal role expectations for men and women. As argued by Sinclair (1985), all the great religious works—the Bible, the Koran, and the Talmud, for example—give men permission to control women. In the West, during medieval times, men were expected to discipline their wives with verbal abuse. But if that did not work, physical violence was considered the next necessary step.

The expression "rule of thumb" originates from a common English tradition. In 1767 William Blackstone summarized the ancient right that permitted a husband "to chastise his wife with a whip or rattan no bigger than his thumb." Evidence of the rule of thumb, according to Sinclair (1985), is still with us in Canadian society. It is the principle of noninterference, of assuming that a man's home is his castle and what he does there is his private business. This is the contemporary rule of thumb.

According to Vis-a-Vis (1989), the birth of the first Canadian shelter for battered women, A Woman's Place, occurred in Vancouver in the early 1970s. Its creation is attributed to a group of militant feminists who, while working in a community centre, saw a need for a residence that would take in abused women and their children. Peggy Anne Walpole, one of these feminists, had set up Street Haven in Toronto in 1965. She was particularly aware that the Vancouver community centre did not adequately meet the needs of many women subjected to violence.

Other Canadian women's organizations experienced similar needs. By 1979, 71 shelters for abused women and their children had been set up across the country. By
1987, 230 shelters were in existence; a year later, there were 292. A Transition Home Survey in 1992-93 conducted by the Canadian government's Family Violence Initiative (1991-95) was sent out to 371 shelters/hostels and transition homes. The founding of nearly 400 shelters since the early 1970s dramatically indicates the fact that spousal abuse remained buried within the family domicile in previous years.

Nevertheless, even though the shelter movement across Canada has assisted women through support, advocacy, and referral, quite often the children are forgotten. As Jaffe (1988) states:

Until recently, children who observe this violence have been ignored. Child abuse awareness programs focus on the dramatic incidents of physical or sexual abuse where the trauma is obvious. Children who witness wife assault face a form of emotional or psychological abuse. . . . Attention to the needs of children who witness wife assault is essential for both immediate and long-term consequences.

Therefore in addition to continuing to assist the women victims of family violence, attention to the needs of children who witness family violence must be added as well. (p. 2)

During the course of my literature review, I tried to find resources that explained why family violence is so prevalent in our society. I searched for studies of this issue but found very few, although I did note a wide range of theories. DeKeseredy (1993), who conducted a computer-assisted literature review, revealed that "much more empirical work on family violence is warranted because so few studies have been conducted" (p. 3).

**Theoretical Dimension**

A number of theories attempt to explain family violence. Many of them are positivistic and rely on a medical model for their explanations. One example is described by Vernon H. Mark and Frank R. Ervin in C. H. McCaghy's *Deviant Behaviour* (1976).
As proponents of psychosurgery, Mark and Ervin claim that an appreciable percentage of people who practise repeated personal violence do so because their brains do not function normally. Their theory is based on animal research and on people with a history of violent rages. They argue that these individuals have abnormal electrical activity in the limbic systems of their brains and that their aggression can be curbed through psychosurgery. As Mark and Ervin suggest in McCaghy (1976), individuals who beat their spouses are subject to "dyscontrol syndrome."

Several sociological theories point to structural factors—such as economic, housing, ecological, and work conditions (Eekelaar and Katz, 1978); one's socioeconomic class (Silverman and Teevan Jr., 1980); and socialization (Sinclair, 1985, and Jaffe et al., 1988)—as possible causes of violence. One of the most prevalent theories is the cycle of violence, which tries to explain the socialization of children. This theory is known as the "intergenerational cycle" or "social learning model" and is discussed by Jaffe et al. (1989a), MacLeod (1987), and Sinclair (1985).

MacLeod (1987) argues that children who grow up in homes where violence exists tend to resolve their problems with more violence. In order to break this cycle, children's voices need to be heard. We must listen to what they have to say. Many children grow up believing it is acceptable behaviour for their fathers to physically abuse their mothers. For boys, such acceptance indicates that it is okay for their fathers to hit their mothers; for girls, it signals that since their mothers allowed themselves to be struck, then it is okay for them to endure abuse, too.

The socialization of children is intended to prepare them for productive adulthood. The family as an institution plays a key part in rearing society's future generations. Parents who have a secure relationship with each other and who see parenthood as one of the most important roles they are expected to perform provide their child with an increased opportunity to become a successful adult and eventual parent. On the other hand, a child who is raised in a family where relationships are strained or violent
and abusive, where the role of parenthood is replaced with fear as a result of the power and control of one partner over the other, has his or her chances to become a successful adult and eventual parent significantly decreased. A study conducted by Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1981) estimated that boys who witness their fathers' violence engage in wife assault as adults 10 times more often than sons of nonviolent fathers.

Leonore Walker, a renowned American psychologist who has served as an expert witness in cases involving abused women who have murdered their partners, puts forward three theories that explain family violence psychologically. These include "intermittent reinforcement," "posttraumatic stress disorder" (PTSD), and "learned helplessness." The theory of "learned helplessness," as discussed by Walker (1989), explains why women remain in their abusive relationships. She writes

that a woman does not learn to be helpless but that a woman can learn she is unable to predict the effect her behaviour will have. . . . People suffering from "learned helplessness" are more likely to choose behavioural responses that will have the highest predictability of an effect within the known, or familiar situation; they avoid responses like escape, for instance—that launch them into the unknown. (p. 50)

Walker (1989) has identified five factors in childhood and seven factors in adulthood that signify or infer the presence of "learned helplessness." The five childhood factors are:

1. Witnessing or experiencing battering at home.
2. Sexual abuse or molestation as a child or teenager.
3. Critical periods during which the child experienced noncontingent control.
4. Stereotyped sex role socialization supporting rigid traditionality.
5. Health problems or chronic illness. (pp. 51-52)

Another model, as presented by Jaffé et al. (1988) and Wolfe et al. (1986), is the "family disruption hypothesis." This theory suggests how children are affected by the
fallout from family violence in terms of decreased effectiveness, changes in family residence, sibling distress, and anticipatory fear of new episodes of violence.

In her research on male violence, Miedzian (1995) found there was considerable agreement among sociobiologists who feel that environment can make a difference in the way violent behaviour is encouraged or discouraged. However, as stressed by Miedzian (1995), violence is best understood as developing out of an interaction between biological potential and certain kinds of environments.

Research indicates that no one model or theory captures all the actual and potential effects of family violence. A comprehensive model of the effects of witnessing family violence may have to incorporate several theoretical formulations in order to represent adequately the present research findings.

**Political and Economic Dimension**

A relatively recent political and economic development in Ontario has wrought dismaying changes for children caught up in family violence in that province. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, children of abused women were just beginning to have their needs recognized by shelters, hostels, and second-stage housing facilities. Furthermore, the providers of these services to abused women and children were actively involved in creating appropriate programming to address these needs. However, in the fall of 1995, with the election of Mike Harris's Conservative government and the implementation of the Common Sense Revolution, children once again became forgotten victims in the cycle of family violence. As reported in the *Globe and Mail* on October 4, 1995, and in the *Toronto Star* on October 5, 1995, the Ministry of Community and Social Services terminated counselling and support services to children and battered women residing in second-stage housing. The ministry also cut counselling and support for men who batter.
Children and their mothers can still seek temporary safety from violent partners in shelters and hostels, but only for six weeks. Many of these children have lived with violence for years, and the traumas they have experienced cannot be healed in such a short period of time. They are still able to use second-stage housing for six to 12 months, but the support and counselling components of these facilities are no longer available.

MacLeod's 1987 study found that financial costs of family violence are astronomical in Canada. Figures on the costs were only available from police services and from shelters and hostels that accepted battered women and children. MacLeod reported that the various levels of government in Canada paid out an estimated $1.6 billion for all police services in 1980. For shelters and transition houses, she estimated that governments in this country paid out $40 million in 1985. According to MacLeod, there is no way of knowing the true cost of hospitalization for physical injuries or psychological problems. Nor can we determine how many children have to repeat grades in schools, how many have to receive special tutoring related to the stress they live with in their battering family, or how many women and children are on welfare because they left a battering man. In short, the financial cost of wife battering to society is overwhelming.

A more recent cost analysis of violence against women and children was completed by the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children in 1995 and was reported in the Guide to Services for Assaulted Women in Ontario. The annual cost of violence against women and children in this country has been estimated at more than $4 billion. This figure includes costs of medical and dental treatments; long-term counselling and social services; lost time at work; and legal, court, and prison expenditures. (p. 51)

Are these costs justified? The Harris government would say no. However, since family violence is an issue that has only recently been addressed by governments and communities, there has not been enough time to determine if the programs and services introduced in recent years have worked. It is strongly believed by professionals currently
working in the field of family violence that if children are taught at an early age that violence is not acceptable or normal, their chances of leading nonviolent lives are maximized. However, only time and longitudinal studies of the issue at all levels in society will provide more definitive answers.

In the case of the hostel where I work, the Harris cuts left us with no Violence Against Women funding. This meant that three full-time staff members, two of whom were child-and-youth workers, had to be laid off. As a result of this cutback, we currently have no programming available for children and we have experienced an increase in behaviour problems among those who use our facility.

The Harris government's cuts in services to families living in violence may reduce financial costs to society in the short term, but real common sense should tell one that reducing services, particularly to children, can only increase costs to society in the long term.

**What Studies Exist on the Topic?**

In reviewing the available literature, I tried to find resources that would explain why family violence is so prevalent in our society. I also attempted to identify research that had been conducted on this issue, particularly in relation to children. I discovered a wide range of theories but only came across a few studies that touched on the subject of children and how they are affected by family violence.

In a field interview in 1997 with one of my respondents, a child-and-youth worker at a shelter in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), I asked for some validations of my findings. I found that a great deal of research existed on wife abuse and women assault but that little work had been done concerning the experiences of children. The worker told me:

They have done a little bit on or quite a bit of information on children, but where they've really got a huge gap is that they've done 12 and under. Well, actually,
they usually do six to 12, but where there's absolutely no research done is on girls between the age of 12 to 17 or 18. Try to find any materials where there's any studies done on these! These children are [still] at the age where we could change them. That's the age where they're getting into their relationships. That's where they're starting the cycle. I mean, we could help them choose the right partners and get into the right relationship as long as we can get to them. I know that there's nothing being done. I know myself that I've looked for information and there isn't [any]. There's nothing.

Another surprise I received in my literature research concerned the nature of what has been done with children. For the most part this research consists of psychological and clinical studies such as Peled et al. (1995), Jaffe et al. (1988), and Wolfe et al. (1985), all of which mainly follow a medical model that advocates diagnosis and treatment. I realize this is important research, but behaviour and attitudes are only two aspects of the family-violence issue. We need a more holistic approach that incorporates other issues such as socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds; gender, religious beliefs, and so on. In other words, research on children who have experienced family violence needs to be multidimensional.

I also did not uncover any longitudinal research studies of children who have experienced family violence. Since the cycle of violence—the "intergenerational cycle" or "social learning model"—is one of the predominant theories that helps explain why family violence exists, it would seem sensible to follow children through at least two or three generations.

Drawing on my 16 years of experience working with abused women and their children in a hostel environment, I know that the cycle-of-violence theory holds true. I have seen abused women come into the hostel with their daughters and then, a few years later, the same daughters, now teenagers, return after being abused by their boyfriends.

In one case an abused mother and her three daughters (ranging in age from nine to 13) sought sanctuary in our hostel. The abused mother eventually left the hostel but soon started another, equally violent relationship with a man, prompting her to seek shelter
with us once more. This became an ongoing trend. The daughters, of course, were exposed to these numerous violent relationships with men. Finally, the mother returned with her youngest daughter, who was only 17 years old and now had a child of her own as a result of continuing violence in the family. This represented three generations of uninterrupted family violence. At one point, the middle child of this abused mother also returned with a child for the same reason. Only the oldest daughter escaped the cycle. She came to our hostel one night when she was 16 and able to leave home legally. The girl remained in one of our housing programs for just over a year and was able to finish high school. She then went on to complete a college-diploma course. However, I still wonder if she has successfully escaped the violence she endured for 16 years, or whether we will see her return with children of her own one day.

As seen from the above example, it would seem logical to perform longitudinal studies that follow children through at least two or three generations. Experts working in the field know intuitively that if more were done for child witnesses of family violence, the cycle of violence could more easily be broken. Unfortunately, studies of the issue almost always focus on adults, not children, which results in funding for adults, with the idea that if the parents are "fixed," the children will be fine.

Longitudinal studies demonstrate to policy makers the grave need to end the cycle of violence for children. They also validate what abused women and other social-service workers in the field know intuitively. Peled et al. (1995) state:

Abused women and front-line staff in shelters have spoken out for over a quarter century about violence in the lives of women and children. Gradually, social scientists have "validated" these observations with increasing evidence that witnessing violence is neither a benign or passive event. Violence and the misuse of power and control may gradually traumatize even the most resilient hearts and minds among our children. (p. 284)
During my literature research, I found that biographical and ethnographical accounts give a voice to women and relay in great detail their experiences of violence with their spouses. However, very little is mentioned about the experiences of their children. One particular ethnographic account (Martin, 1996) did address the issues children face, but it was relayed to the researcher from the mother, not from the children directly.

It quickly became apparent to me that knowledge about children who have experienced or witnessed family violence is quite sparse, while information from an adult perspective is abundant. I also found that the old saying "behind closed doors" still pertains, making it difficult for a researcher to get proper access to children who have suffered family violence.

It is important to acknowledge that in the majority of cases women are more frequently victims of family violence than their husbands or partners. A feminist's analysis, according to Sudermann et al. (1995), suggests that "the underpinnings of violence in relationships has emphasized that individuals in our society learn that women and other disempowered groups [such as children] are appropriate and acceptable targets of violence." (p. 234)

When asked in my questionnaire what was the major cause of family violence, one respondent replied: "It was an issue of power and control and that women are second-class citizens and their children are even lower."

A study by Toufexis in 1987 found that wife assault is the cause of more injuries to women than the combined injuries from car accidents, muggings, and rapes. Statistics Canada and other organizations have suggested that one in 10 women are assaulted or abused by their partners. However, Smith (1987), in a carefully conducted study in Toronto, found this figure too low. Smith's study discovered that "1 in 3 women had experienced some form of physical abuse over the course of their adult years, and 14.4% had experienced abuse in the immediately preceding year." (2, pp. 173-187)
DeKeseredy (1993), in his research, acknowledges that violence by women does occur and should be dealt with. However, he suggests from empirical evidence currently available that it is a relatively minor problem. Berk et al. (1983) note: "While there are certainly occasional instances of husbands being battered, it is downright pernicious to equate their experiences with those of the enormous number of women who are routinely and severely victimized." (p. 210)

Miedzian (1995) reports that 90 percent of individuals arrested in the United States for acts of violence are males. Why are they more likely to act violently than females? Miedzian feels that it has a lot to do with the fact that masculinity is centred on toughness, dominance, extreme competitiveness, eagerness to fight and repression of empathy... the socialization of boys has increasingly encouraged this concept of masculinity, instead of moving away from it... men are encouraged to act in accordance to this obsolete set of values that refer to as "the masculine mystique." These values play a major role in criminal and domestic violence and underlie the thinking and political decisions of many of our political leaders. (p. 11)

The converse of Miedzian's argument suggests that a woman's victimization stems from an obsolete definition of what it means to be female. Women, this argument maintains, are soft, passive, nurturing, caring, and free to express empathy, qualities that could be part of a "feminine fantasy." Values such as these, it is noted by those who advocate this position, leave women vulnerable to domination and control by men.

In this thesis, I interviewed child advocates who work with children from homes where abuse of women exists. As well, I conducted observations at shelters or hostels that provide programs and services for children who have witnessed family violence. As a result of this family violence, the women and children involved have often been forced or advised to leave their homes and seek refuge at local shelters or hostels.
METHODOLOGY

My plan for the collection of data on children who have experienced family violence involved a four-step process that included a questionnaire to shelters/hostels in Ontario, observations of children in a shelter or hostel, interviews with child-and-youth workers at the shelters or hostels, and discussion of my findings with experts who work with children in the area of family violence.

Initially, I assumed my methods would provide me with sufficient data to answer my questions. However, I had no idea just how many obstacles I would encounter in exploring family violence in relation to children. In the end, some of my original data-collection methods had to be modified. What follows is a description of my methodology and a discussion of the difficulties and successes I had.

The Questionnaire

Fifteen questionnaires were mailed to shelters/hostels in Ontario. The shelters/hostels were representative of most of the various geographic areas of the province based on population. These included the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Eastern Ontario, Southwestern and Western Ontario, Northern Ontario, and rural areas within the province. The shelters/hostels were selected from a Health and Welfare Canada publication entitled Transition Houses and Shelters for Battered Women in Canada.

Ten shelters/hostels responded to the questionnaire as a result of the mailout and follow-up telephone calls. I felt this was a good response ratio since I know that shelters/hostels across the province have experienced funding cuts and workers are expected to do more and yet continue to provide high-quality service with fewer human and financial resources. This means that responding to questionnaires is not a top priority.
The questionnaire was meant to assist me in selecting sites for my research, and I did not intend to analyze the data collected. From the questionnaire responses, I hoped to select three to four shelters/hostels that had child-and-youth workers whom I could interview. Since I had to have a reasonably large group of children for the study, I also wanted to know the number of beds at each shelter/hostel, and whether the facility had children's programming. Furthermore, I needed a child-and-youth worker available in the event that any sensitive information was disclosed by a child during the observational period. The responses to the questionnaire, however, made me realize there was also data that could be used with the observations and interviews I did.

One of my errors in mailing out the questionnaire was not coding in some way the stamped self-addressed envelopes I had provided so that I would know which shelter/hostel the response had come from. This meant that I did not know which geographic area in the province the response was from. For the most part, this was not important. However, since the questionnaire was mailed to shelters and hostels, it became difficult to determine which type of facility answered the questions. In other words, was the one shelter/hostel that did not have a child-and-youth worker a hostel or a shelter?

The difference between a shelter and a hostel involves what it serves and how it is funded. Hostels serve homeless men, women, and children. Some hostels service only men and others only women and children. For this study, I mailed my questionnaire to hostels that served only women and children. Shelters, on the other hand, provide services only to abused women and children.

The funding structure for hostels and shelters is also different. The main sources of a hostel's funding are regional and county governments (through a per diem rate), the United Way, community groups and individuals, and corporations. Hostels also augment their revenues through fundraising events. Shelters get money from all the above sources and in addition receive core funding from Ontario's Ministry of Community and Social Services (COMSOC) for support services such as individual counselling and group work
for women, children's programming, public education, and an outreach service of follow-up programs after women and children leave the shelter.

Since hostels do not receive core funding from COMSOC for support services, they are not obligated to retain specialized frontline workers such as child-and-youth workers for children's programming. One shelter/hostel stated in my questionnaire that it did not have a child-and-youth worker, which would seem to indicate that it might be a hostel. However, that is not necessarily true.

Shelters have also had cuts from COMSOC in their core funding. Since per diem rates, another source of funding for shelters, are set by regional or county governments, there is a wide range of per diem rates across the province. In my discussions with the staff of several hostels and shelters, I found that this rate can vary from region to region across the province from approximately $60 per day per person in Toronto to $11 per day per person in one area of Southwestern Ontario. As a result of the core-funding cuts, and dependent on the amount of per diem rates received, the shelter/hostel that stated it did not have a child-and-youth worker could have been a shelter. Again, in my discussions with staff members of some of the shelters/hostels, I discovered that the first services sacrificed due to funding cuts and lower per diem rates were often the programs and services for children.

Hostels, which are located in heavily populated areas such as the GTA, have access to larger pools of revenue from agencies and corporations in their community and have greater opportunities for fundraising events. So along with higher per diems and better access to revenue resources, they can retain specialized workers such as child-and-youth advocates even without the core funding received by shelters from COMSOC.

Because I wanted to study only children who have experienced family violence, I felt it was important to know whether the respondents operated hostels or shelters. Since shelters provide service only to women and children who have experienced family violence, it made more sense to do my research there because it would provide programs
specific to children. In hostels, on the other hand, women and children use the services for a wide range of reasons, one being family violence. Therefore, a hostel's children's programming may not be specific to family violence.

My failure to code the questionnaire left me unable to determine whether the respondent worked in a shelter or in a hostel. Furthermore, I had no idea where the facility was located in Ontario. Since some shelters/hostels returned their questionnaires with covering letters, I was able to determine who they were, whether they were a shelter or a hostel, and where they were located. However, I was still unable to do a more random selection of sites and was limited in who I could choose to do the observations and interviews with.

Overall, the questionnaire proved to be a useful tool in my data-collection process. The data provided me with more insight and knowledge to proceed with my observations and interviews. Although I only intended to use the questionnaire as a means to select sites for interviews and observations, I found that the respondents' input in the survey was also beneficial to the final analysis in my study.

Gaining Access to the Field

Due to the sensitive nature of the family-violence issue and the fact that to a large extent it still remains behind close doors, I knew that the selection of participants might be difficult. For that reason, I felt a shelter for abused women would be the best choice. I chose a shelter for two reasons: (1) easy access to a reasonably large group of children of all ages who have experienced family violence and who reside in one location; and (2) access to professional backup from staff if sensitive disclosures resulted from the interview process.

Women and children who use a shelter are not entirely representative of family-violence victims. Often they resort to a shelter because of their socioeconomic
backgrounds and their lack of other social networks, as suggested by Silverman and Teevan Jr. (1980). For example, a mother and her children with greater financial resources can escape to a hotel, or, if they have a social network, they can seek safety with friends or family, whereas a mother who lacks these resources usually has no option other than to seek sanctuary in a public shelter. However, putting aside all other factors, these women and children, no matter what their socioeconomic backgrounds and social networks, all have common experiences and histories pertaining to family violence.

One example that clearly demonstrates that family violence knows no social boundaries is the true story of Colin Thatcher, a Canadian politician and wealthy landowner who served as a member of Saskatchewan's legislature and as a minister in the provincial government. The violence experienced at the hands of Mr. Thatcher by his wife, JoAnn (who was eventually murdered by her husband), and their three children was chronicled in Maggie Siggins's 1985 book *A Canadian Tragedy* (and dramatized in the Canadian TV miniseries *Love and Hate*, 1989).

To gain access to the four shelters I chose, I wrote letters to the facilities' chief administrators outlining what my study was about and why I felt it was important. I also advised the administrators that I would share any data or research I collected at each step of the process. As well, I outlined how my data would be kept confidential and that at any stage the shelter or any of the respondents would be free to withdraw. Once the administrators felt comfortable with the study, they were asked to sign an administrative consent so that I could proceed.

Since I would be observing the children at these shelters, I also needed to get parental consent. Each shelter's chief administrator told the mothers of these children why the study was important and how I would share the data I collected as it related to their children. The chief administrators also informed the mothers that the data would be kept confidential and that they would be free to withdraw their children from the study at any time during the observational period.
Although I knew my study dealt with sensitive material, particularly since it involved children who had witnessed extremely traumatic and violent episodes between their parents, I was still surprised at how many barriers I had to face to gain access to my subjects. I had assumed that my knowledge and experience in working with abused women and their children, along with the importance of such a study, the provision of confidentiality, and the ability of the respondents to withdraw at any time, would allow me access to the shelters. However, this was not the case, and my experience taught me valuable lessons: never assume anything, have more than one plan in mind, and allow ample time to overcome obstacles that arise in the course of research.

After mailing letters to the shelters I had selected for my study, I expected responses would be returned to me in writing or by telephone. This did not occur, though, and more than a month passed without any answer. I then contacted the four shelters by telephone to see if they had received my letters and if they were willing to accommodate my research. This also took a great deal of time, since I needed to get permission directly from the shelter's chief administrator, who was often unavailable when I called.

The Eastern Ontario shelter finally returned my call and informed me that it had a firm policy of no research. It did acknowledge that the research I planned to do was valuable and referred me to a family centre in the area.

The shelter in the GTA also contacted me and refused access. This shelter cited an example of a resident who had been traumatized after a previous research experience. As a result of this, the GTA shelter had developed a policy of no research, even when it involved its own workers.

The shelter in a rural area also denied entry. Although it did not have a formal policy, it did have an unwritten agreement among staff and residents that it would not allow access to researchers. The shelter's chief administrator stated that "staff and residents felt that research would put them under a microscope."
The Southwestern Ontario shelter finally returned my telephone call but only agreed to let me interview two of its child-and-youth workers. The shelter would not allow me to observe children under its care.

In the end, I had to contact more than 10 shelters and hostels to gain access for my research. This compromised my original plan, since I was unable to get entry to a shelter in a rural area or complete the number of observations of the children I had planned.

Refusals by shelters and hostels to admit researchers is not unusual. I had anticipated some difficulty due to concerns about confidentiality and protection of residents' safety and privacy. However, I felt my letter requesting permission properly outlined what my study was about and that my 16 years of experience in a hostel environment would help me gain access.

What I had not anticipated was how much recent funding cuts had affected staff time and numbers, particularly when it came to assisting researchers. In retrospect, I should have realized this based on my own experience at our hostel.

In the past, when our hostel had requests from researchers, a whole process was put in place to protect the privacy and safety concerns of our women and children. Researchers would first meet with the executive director and the manager of the emergency hostel. They would be interviewed so that they could explain in detail what their research would accomplish and how they planned to conduct it. Researchers were also asked to bring three references, and criminal police checks had to be done. Once the references were conducted and the police checks had indicated the researchers did not have criminal records, they were invited back to be interviewed by the frontline staff who would assist them in their research projects.

Currently, our own hostel, undermined by cuts in staff, has refused entry to researchers unless they are someone we know very well. The process of allowing entry to an unknown researcher is far too time-consuming. I assume this was a major reason why so many hostels and shelters refused me entry, particularly to observe children.
I felt the two observations I was able to do at one shelter in the GTA were a result of my knowing the chief administrator very well. I had known this woman for more than 12 years and we had worked together on different projects and attended several functions and workshops. She granted me two observations of children.

Eventually, I also got four interviews with child advocates. One interview was done at a family centre in Eastern Ontario, two were conducted with workers in the GTA at two different locations (a shelter and a hostel), and the fourth took place at a shelter in Southwestern Ontario. The last involved interviewing the shelter's two child-and-youth workers together. One respondent was available for the complete interview, while the second was on hand for two-thirds of the session due to a shift overlap. This resulted in an interesting interview, since the second respondent was able to either concur with the first respondent's answers or offer another perspective on the issues discussed.

**Observations**

Leonore Walker (1979) discusses how abused women are often initially ambivalent and that they tend to return to their relationships quickly. Women's ambivalence often stems from their fears of the unknown and making changes. At home they knew what to expect. In a shelter or hostel, the future is uncertain. On the one hand, they know it is no longer safe at home for them or their children, but coming to a hostel or shelter can be just as stressful as the violent environment they have left.

Aware of this factor, I knew my planned observations would not always be with the same children. To overcome this concern, I arranged the two observations so that there was only one day between them. I hoped that would mean the same children would be at each session.

Unfortunately, the second observation had to be postponed by the shelter and a new date was set. As a result, the second observation occurred two weeks later and the
children involved were different from those in the first session. My qualms about observing different children did not become a problem since similar behaviour and relationships existed in both observations. In fact, I can say with more confidence now that similar behaviour appears to manifest itself in all children exposed to family violence.

During the first hourlong observation, my role was at the far end of the continuum, as described by Babbie (1989) as a "complete observer." I merely observed the activities of the children, mothers, and other workers that night and, as Babbie states, I was unable to develop a full appreciation of the issues being studied.

During my second hourlong observation, my role, out of necessity, was at the other continuum described by Babbie and became that of "participant-as-observer." In this role, as Babbie states, researchers can "go native" and lose much of their scientific detachment. As it turned out, I did get involved in the activity with the children and the two workers, but I also had the benefit of experiencing more fully what I was studying. Fortunately, the children appeared to carry out their activities in a normal manner and merely saw me as another adult taking part in the evening's event.

Since I was unable to record notes during either observation, I returned home and immediately jotted down key points that would jog my memory when I did the actual field notes. In both cases, I was able to record my field notes the next day and, thanks to my memory joggers, recall even minute details and certain statements made by the children.

**Interviews**

In this phase of my research, I did three interviews with child-and-youth workers involved with children who have experienced family violence. The fourth interview I conducted was with a counsellor at a family centre that does group work with children who have witnessed family violence. The main differences between the shelters and the
centre is that the children do not reside at the centre and the centre's activities are all child-centred, unlike the shelter where some activities involve the mother and children together.

At the beginning of each interview, I sensed the respondents were reserved and nervous. As the interviewer, I, too, felt uneasy in the unfamiliar surroundings. Before taping the interviews, I briefly outlined my background and explained what I was attempting to research. This procedure alleviated some of the nervousness felt by the respondents and myself.

During each interview, we became quite relaxed and talked freely with each other about the issues under discussion. As indicated in the tape transcriptions, our voices became more distinct, louder, and clearer as the interview progressed. In fact, there was even laughter and humorous comments made. This easygoing conversational style was what I had hoped to achieve.

Each interview ranged from 45 minutes to one hour, depending on the interviewee's time. All interviews were taped with the respondents' permission. The participants were told at the outset that anything they said was confidential and that they were free to withdraw at any time. I also reminded them that they could review their transcribed interviews if they wished.

Since I did not want the respondents to be influenced by my own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, judgements, and observations, I followed the advice of Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and allowed them to play strong roles in defining the content of the interviews. This was important to me because I wanted the data collected to speak for itself.

Although there were key points I wanted clarified in my questionnaire, observations, and literature review, the questions I posed were left open so the respondents could interpret them in their own way. At the end of the interviews the participants were also given the opportunity to add any comments they wanted to express.
Since I was not given permission to do observations in three of my interview locations, I chose to make notes while waiting for the sessions to begin. In one shelter, I was given a tour of the facility, which gave me the opportunity to make observations.

At the family centre the interview was conducted in the counsellor's office. On the office wall, I observed a number of pictures that had been made by the children using the centre. These pictures, for the most part, displayed various scenes of violence.

The one that had the most impact on me had obviously been drawn by a younger child. The picture displayed the child's family with stick figures. The two stick figures of the children were much smaller than those used by the child to display the child's parents. In one corner of the picture, the two children huddled and held hands. On the other side of the drawing were stick figures of a man and a woman. The man had a weapon in his hand, which was raised above his head as if he were about to attack the woman.

Because my interview time was limited and I had not planned to do any analysis of children's drawings for this research, I did not ask the family counsellor to interpret the drawing. I left the facility thinking how traumatized the child must have been to draw such a violent scene. I know from my own experiences at my hostel that women tell stories of how their partners have threatened them with guns, axes, iron pipes, and so on. These women often say their children were present when these threats were made and that they were very frightened or traumatized by what they had seen.

Professionals Who Work with Children and Woman Abuse

To augment the data I collected in my interviews, I felt it was important to confer with other professionals who work with children who have experienced family violence. Since my own interpretations from the data could be subjective, I valued the opinions of these professionals.
I planned to confer with these individuals when I completed my analysis of the data collected and reported my findings. I spoke with two professionals. One conducts groups for children who have witnessed family violence, while the other has counselled abused women. Both individuals have worked with children and abused women for more than five years. Between them they have a combined experience in family violence of 12 years. Each professional agreed to review my data and make comments, which I have included in this study.

**The Process**

My objective was to provide answers to my original questions, which were rooted in the empiricism of my 16 years of personal observations in one hostel. I used an inductive process to achieve this goal. An inductive process yields certain themes or theories that are made probable through the collection and accumulation of confirming evidence from respondents. Such a process does not provide the validity that can be expected from a deductive study, but my research does offer probability based on evidence I collected from experienced and knowledgeable participants with whom I conducted interviews and sent questionnaires to. In other words, I found answers to my questions through constant comparative analysis. This meant comparing the data I collected in my questionnaire, interviews, observations, and literature review.

The next step in processing the information I accumulated involved categorizing and coding my data into themes and categories and subthemes and subcategories to address the questions I raised. Returning to the initial question that spurred this study, I wanted to ascertain if children who have witnessed family violence were being heard. My own sense based on years of experience working with children who had come into our hostel indicates that children are not heard. If this is the case, how are these children being dealt with?
This question then led to another series of queries with no answers. What kinds of services exist in Ontario's current hostels and shelters for children who have witnessed or experienced family violence? Are the services for these children adequate? How do hostels and shelters deliver their services for these children? What is the significance of giving children who have witnessed or experienced family violence some voice in this issue? What can society expect from future generations of children if we continue to ignore these victims of family violence? Finally, how does our culture perpetuate the cycle of family violence? The answers to these questions emerged from the responses in my interviews and questionnaire and from my field observations of the children in this study.

At the end of each phase in my field research, I compiled all the data I transcribed word for word in the interviews, did detailed field notes of my observations, and recorded detailed answers to my questionnaire. This process produced subthemes that were common and constant across all three of my research techniques. The process also created subthemes that existed in only two of the techniques used to collect data, but in some cases were substantial enough when compared to what had been researched by others. I also found that certain themes or theories existed on their own and had little or no relevance to this particular research but were worthy of further study.

There were certain criteria for selecting my subthemes so that I could report my findings. One criterion was that the particular subtheme would answer the questions I had posed in order to shed light on this issue. For example, several of the respondents in the interviews and questionnaires reported that lack of funding had severely impacted on the shelter's or hostel's ability to provide adequate services or programs for children. In some cases, the respondents stated that their shelter or hostel had reduced hours of service or laid off their child-and-youth workers to respond to the funding cuts.

Another criterion I set was that any data used to report the findings had to relate to children. Since the collection of data was open-ended for respondents, particularly in the interviews I conducted, the respondent often provided information that directly
related to the parents of the children but was not pertinent to this research. On the other hand, certain data about the parents did relate to the children. For example, in the questionnaire and, to some extent, in the interviews, discussions concerning numbers of children versus mothers were comparable in each of the different hostels or shelters I surveyed or visited.

The third criterion I used for selection of my subthemes was that the subtheme had to be constant and common in at least two of the research techniques I employed. If the selection of data used existed in only two of the field methods adopted, then my findings would reflect this, or in some cases I might substantiate the data with other research from my literature review.

Finally, in my selection process of what to report in the findings, I attempted to avoid comments or statements from respondents that were interpretative or vague and not based on or backed up with some form of explanation or fact. There were also statements and comments made by respondents in which I failed to get adequate clarification. In such cases I eliminated the data, even though in some instances the comment or statement was striking. Since I failed to get clarification, I did not want to misinterpret or assume what the respondent meant.

Once I developed these subthemes according to my criteria, I was able to conceptualize them into a theory or theme. This technique allowed me to organize the large amounts of data I collected into manageable material for reporting the findings.

The Study's Limitations

It is important to highlight in some detail certain limits of this particular study. These included selection of respondents, location of sites, and researching in my own territory.
First, the selection of respondents using hostels or shelters limits this study because it does not include children who come from homes where family violence exists but who have not used a hostel or shelter. For the most part, women and their children who use hostels or shelters for safety come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. These women and children lack financial and social networks open to women and children who have financial means and other social supports.

A common myth is that only women and children who are on low incomes or social assistance experience family violence. This is not true. Women and children who have better financial and social means merely choose different resources and services than their counterparts and their experiences can be kept secret. They can afford to relocate if necessary, seek private counselling, and receive more financial support from their families, friends, and workplaces. Since I did not have access to a group of children whose mothers had more affluent resources and better social supports, I cannot generalize my findings to all children who have experienced family violence.

Another problem in the selection of respondents was my inability to access children in a more meaningful and direct way. The data I collected was seen through the eyes of hostel and shelter workers and the writers of the available literature. The workers' responses in the interviews and questionnaires suggest that children are not acknowledged in the issue of family violence. However, the children in this study did not have an opportunity to express this in their own words.

Ideally, if I had had access to children who have experienced or witnessed family violence, more depth would have been added to this study. However, ethical concerns, from my own perspective and those of the shelter and hostel workers I had access to, precluded doing interviews with children.

Shelters and hostels have extremely protective policies for victims of family violence and, in particular, for children. Some children witness horribly traumatic events, so undertaking field research with them could cause serious damage. What may be gained
in the name of research could have a traumatic impact on the children studied, thus negating any value the research may achieve. Even in the literature I reviewed I discovered that the information reported on the issue does not come from the actual words of children. The data reported is secondhand, since it usually comes from the child's psychologist, mother, or child-and-youth worker.

Geography was another limitation inherent in my study. All my questionnaires, interviews, and observations were completed only with shelters and hostels in Ontario. Therefore, my findings and any conclusions are only pertinent to what exists in Ontario. Although hostels and shelters exist across Canada, it cannot be assumed that my findings prevail in all geographical areas of the country. For example, Ontario lacks certain services for children, but that does not mean they are unavailable to children in other provinces or territories.

A final problem in my study is the fact that I did the research in familiar territory. As the researcher, I collected data, particularly in the interviews, from my professional colleagues. I did not know them personally, but they knew I had years of experience in this field. My experience made access somewhat easier and allowed me to establish trust in the respondents, yet my background also had its drawbacks.

As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) discuss, researching in your own geographical area can pose certain problems: "In your research role, you will relate to known persons as your research 'others.' This switch may prove confusing to both parties" (p. 22). Glesne and Peshkin suggest that this can lead to respondents not providing careful answers to the researcher's questions.

I found this shortcoming to be true. At one interview the respondent asked me, "You must know what that's like?" Another comment from a different respondent was "You must find that happening at your place, too?" As a result, some respondents neglected to explain in detail what they started out to discuss, assuming I knew the
answers. Unfortunately, because I was a novice researcher, I did not know what was happening and failed to probe for more clarification.

Since I was researching in my own territory, I occasionally let the interview become too conversational. This tendency frequently resulted in the respondent asking me a question. Again, caught off guard, I would respond to the question with my thoughts and feelings about the problem or issue, which could have influenced the respondent's answers.
FINDINGS

The results of my research yielded five main themes or theories: children's behaviour, socialization, funding, provision of services, and cultural implications.

The five themes that emerged from my data provided answers to my original questions. My research data also gave me a better understanding of how children are given little voice in the area of family violence and are not being recognized or acknowledged. To report these findings, I will discuss each of the themes and will illuminate the findings with actual comments from the respondent's interviews, the questionnaire analysis, and the observations I made of children's activities at one shelter.

The individuals interviewed for this thesis and the shelter where observations of the children were done did not want to be identified. For some respondents their comments had ramifications related to their jobs. For others, it was important that their exact location not be known in order to protect the safety of the women and children they serve. I have complied with their wishes and have appended two tables. These charts outline only general information and locations (such as Eastern Ontario) of the shelters or hostels. The use of pseudonyms also protects the identity of the actual respondents. I have deliberately not reported in my findings any specifics about my respondents in order to comply with their requests for anonymity.

Children's Behaviour

In my literature research, I found extensive information related to the impact family violence has on children. The phenomenon has been documented by researchers, psychologists, and counsellors such as Jaffe et al. (1987), Sinclair (1985), Walker (1979), and the authors of the National Clearing House on Family Violence's Wife Abuse: The

In 1993 Statistics Canada completed a large-scale national survey on violence against women. The findings were reported in the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence's Wife Abuse: The Impact on Children (1996), which details the emotional and behavioural effects experienced by children. One of these effects is posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The symptoms of PTSD include reexperiencing the trauma (nightmares, intrusive thoughts or images, flashbacks); fear, anxiety, tension, and hypervigilence; irritability and outbursts of anger and aggression; and attempts to avoid being reminded of the abuse (p. 2).

The same publication also describes how family violence affects children of different ages and genders. The authors found that very young children, even infants, are seriously influenced and may suffer sleep and weight problems and cry excessively. Preschoolers can be anxious and demonstrate clingingness and aggressive behaviour. Children aged six to 10 tend to have school problems and poor social skills. Preteens and teenagers are inclined to drop out of school, become truant, leave home, and get involved in violent dating relationships. The same survey also found that some girls—but not all—who have witnessed family violence can become withdrawn and depressed. Boys, on the other hand, may act aggressively. The study also related that these problems can be present in both girls and boys, thus behaviour cannot be generalized based entirely on a child's gender or age.

Two other studies present similar results. Wolfe et al. (1986) found that battered women rated their children significantly higher in behavioural problems and lower in social competence than a comparison group of mothers. Jaffe et al. (1990) discovered that "girls from violent families exhibit more internalizing behavioural problems and lowered social
competence, while boys demonstrated both internalizing and externalizing behavioural problems, in addition to a lower level of social competence" (p. 217).

In my interview with the respondent at the family centre, I asked what she thought about gender and age differences as factors in the effects of family violence on children. Her response was:

I think it's reassuring to make ourselves say those generalizations, but for every generalization there are 15 children who don't fit that. But, on the other hand, society is more accepting of men or young boys to physically act out than young girls. So there is a tendency to be more accepting of a boy acting in a physical way than accepting a girl acting in a physical way. Those are societal factors. I guess I'm sort of leery of saying that. It's not always true, but it is comforting to know that. Stress can be a wide range of things from crying to upset stomach to inattention in school, and it's very helpful to know this for all of us in this field.

The above respondent challenges the studies that generalize and categorize the behaviour of children who have witnessed family violence. She suggests that the studies propose expectations of child behaviour that are not always true. Although the studies do demonstrate certain predictive behaviour premised on a child's gender and age, it is important, as this respondent points out, to use caution when categorizing. As the family-centre counsellor also indicates, it may be useful to have research that explains how children are changed by violence between their parents, but one should remember that not all children are affected alike and that some behaviours could be caused by other biological and environmental factors.

In my own experience, I have seen children who have witnessed family violence display normal behaviour patterns for their age and gender. But I have also seen other children whose behaviour patterns are far more extreme than those described in the previously mentioned studies.

One example was a 12-year-old boy who was suspended from school because of his behaviour. In fact, his behaviour patterns at school—use of drugs, poor attendance,
aggression and assaults against his peers and teachers—were so severe that his mother was unable to enroll him in any schools within the board's jurisdiction. The boy was eventually placed in a residential facility through Children's Aid, but the facility failed to handle his radical behaviour and returned him to his mother.

Finally, his mother left her violent partner and arrived at our hostel for help. She was distraught, felt helpless and hopeless, and did not know where to turn for help with her son. Attempts for other treatment centres also failed due to long waiting lists, or it was felt the particular facility would not be able to cope with her son's extreme behaviour.

At our hostel his disruptive, aggressive, and assaultive behaviour with the other children and residents continued. Fortunately, we were able to place the mother and boy into one of our transitional apartments. Meanwhile, he was not in school, slept all day, and became more violent and aggressive with his mother. One day he shoved her, grabbed her by the throat, and confined her to the apartment. When she escaped, she came to us for assistance and was obviously overwhelmed by her plight.

We confronted mother and son together. He was dressed in oversize battle fatigues and had a cap pulled over his face. The boy refused to talk and did not respond to our questions or his mother's when asked to explain his behaviour. His body language was tense, angry, and rigid. He maintained no eye contact with us or his mother. The only time he spoke was when we advised him that if he continued his behaviour with his mother we would have to report him to the child authorities and the police. His body language still rigid, he looked away from us and said, "Go ahead. No one fucking cares, anyway. I might as well be dead." Eventually, through pressure on child authorities from his mother and our agency, this badly damaged 12-year-old was located in a residential treatment centre in Northern Ontario. The question now becomes: Can this boy's behaviour be reversed?

This particular story is only a single example of how radical one child's behaviour can become as a result of witnessing family violence. However, I have also seen children
who have experienced family violence who demonstrate age- and gender-appropriate
behaviour. Studies and research that have been conducted on child victims of family
violence should be viewed as guidelines only and can be useful tools in understanding their
behaviour, but to view certain findings as applicable to all youthful victims can be harmful
to their recovery process. In my workplace, I have seen that much of the predictive
behaviour of child witnesses is true, but there is always the child who does not fit the
patterns.

In my field research, I found that, for the most part, my observations matched
what I read in articles and books or viewed on film. All of the respondents at the shelters,
the hostel, and the family centre talked about a number of behaviours and cited examples.
These examples indicated the behaviours and emotional effects that witnessing family
violence had on children with whom they worked. During my two field observations, I
also noted certain behaviour and emotions being exhibited by the children.

Two instances from my field notes of two different boys, one approximately four
years old and the other about six years of age, suggest these boys had indeed witnessed
family violence and were exhibiting emotional and psychological effects. My field notes
concerning the four-year-old boy read:

The four-year-old was obviously very anxious and hyper. He had difficulty sitting
still or listening to what was taking place throughout the game. He always wanted
to be front and centre. Often he would interrupt the child who was reading one of
the circular cards, and his mother had to frequently ask him to be quiet. If he was
not directly involved in the game, he would move about, often disrupting the
circular cards on the floor or talking when a card was read by one of the other
children. As the children won tools to get into the jewel room, the four-year-old
always wanted them to use the ones he had managed to collect, even though they
were not the appropriate ones. One of his comments was: "Use this tool to beat
him up!" [In a shelter for battered women, this comment stands out. I wondered
where he had picked up this language.]

The notes from my observation of the six-year-old boy state:
He was very uncooperative with the others. He disturbed the dice when each of us had our turns so that we were unable to make decisions about which ones to rethrow, even though the youth worker and the assistant worker would tell him not to touch the dice and to wait his turn. Each time it was his turn to throw the dice, he would immediately pick some of them up or turn them over before his partner, the youth worker could help him determine which was the best choice to make. Repeatedly, she reminded him that they were playing together and should decide together. However, the boy continued with this inappropriate behaviour.

It is interesting to note that I completed these two different observations at one shelter. The observations were done two weeks apart with four-year-old and six-year-old boys, and yet their behaviour was similar. They were disruptive to others, uncooperative, and interrupted the games that were played during the two nights I did the observations. These observations are consistent with other research on children's behaviour that I have discussed previously.

The respondents in my interviews also described in detail examples of behaviours of children who have witnessed family violence and how it has impacted them. In their examples, they referred to children of both genders and different age levels.

The counsellor at the family centre related the story of a seven-year-old boy whose behaviour at the beginning of the first 12-week counselling session had been repressed by his experiences. She explained that, as counsellors, they had recognized his need to express his experiences but were concerned about his reluctance to do so. Since they felt this boy really needed help, they allowed him to return to a second 12-week session. The respondent stated:

I remember one child who was a charming seven-year-old boy. When you met him, you'd think he was a very charming, caring boy. His two younger siblings and mother described him as very responsible, very thoughtful. He was doing lots of things that made him seem more responsible than a seven-year-old. His teachers were absolutely amazed, and the mother reported that at home he was absolutely wonderful. When he came to the first series of groups—we run groups of 12 sessions—this little boy was very, very, very thoughtful and very considerate. Then he became more and more and more verbal and rambunctious. But in the first two sessions we really thought we were seeing a lot of feelings, but he was
not really expressing the feelings. We were seeing a lot of upset feelings and sadness, but he wasn't actually expressing them verbally but in techniques we'd use. We might use play, we might use puppets, or we might use artwork. We do a lot of artwork. He'd say, "I'm not doing any artwork. I'm not going to do any artwork 'cause if I draw any of the pictures I might explode." So in the first few sessions he didn't really participate in any of the artwork but wouldn't say what was really going on, but there was still a lot of feeling there. We fought long and hard—we have a long waiting list—whether he should come back to another series of groups. We really felt we needed to help this child and we wanted to give him another try. Well, he came back to the second group and he couldn't stop. He was drawing pictures left, right, and centre. And there were a lot of pictures depicting violence. During that period, he did an enormous amount of artwork and did a lot of talking about things he remembered three and a half years ago. What really validated [his experiences] for us was that we could see a lot of changes in his behaviour because he could talk and remember the times he was quite angry.

Two child-and-youth workers at another shelter mentioned the behaviour of an infant. Although they could not recall the child's exact age, they felt he was between four and six months. One respondent began the story:

You'd drop something or you'd move something. He was an infant. I would say from his behaviour he was showing an extension of the abuse. For example, if anyone moved suddenly in the area, he'd be startled, and he was just a little baby. I mean, it was very odd behaviour. If someone raised their voice, he just looked . . . Remember the look on his face? [the one respondent said to the other]. It was just terror, and he was just a baby! It wasn't your normal infant reactions. He was very frightened! Yes, a young infant. That's about the strongest one I can remember.

I then asked them if the infant reacted more strongly at the sound of the mother's voice than say those of the respondents. They both stated: "No, with anybody. You'd be moving around even and he'd be really startled. And his face! Yeah, a look of terror on this infant's face. He was the most extreme for us."

When I asked the respondents about preschoolers and their behaviour, one said:

One of the big things I think is being away from mom. Even if mom is down in the smoking room and we've got them upstairs, they need to know where mom is.
They need—I don't know—it seems to be stronger in preschoolers because of the way they deal with it. Whereas the teenager will just get up and look for mom, and yeah, mom is there, okay, fine.

I also noticed from my observations in the shelter housing the four-year-old boy mentioned earlier that this behaviour—the need to be with the mother—seemed evident. My field notes indicate:

His younger brother, a two-year-old, was much less disruptive. He was the youngest in the group, but the children allowed him to play the game often, letting him pick a circular card that seemed to please him. He also seemed very reliant on his mother, and when we moved from room to room, playing the game, his mother, who had him on her lap, put him down so he had to walk by himself. When he walked from each room, he always looked back to see if his mother was right behind.

The child advocates I interviewed at the shelters felt the preteen and teenage groups exhibited some of the most extreme behaviour. One worker stated:

I'm thinking of one we had who'll probably be in detention in the next couple of years. Like, the behaviour is such and he's 11 and you're seeing very abusive behaviour toward mom and siblings. Uh, you know, the pattern he's seen growing up, he figures that's normal to do and he's very incapable of responding to discipline in any way. He'll do what he wants and [his mother] tries when she gets more backing from us. She could stick to her guns a little more. But he'd turn around and tell her where to go and it'd start all over again. He'd know when she was alone she's not going to get any backing and she's not going to stick to her guns. I'll mention again for sure that he's going to be in a detention home very shortly.

Another child-and-youth worker at a different shelter states:

I think the big problem seems to be around 11 to 13 years of age—like with truancy. If you think of the ones we've had truancy problems with, and real behaviour outbursts, it's been in that almost preteen [group] . . . The real problem seems to be the preteen and early teenager, and I think a lot of stuff is going on outside, too. Like peer pressure and all that.
The above respondent then recalled an incident involving a child in her early teens who had witnessed family violence and had been sexually assaulted. She had demonstrated very extreme behaviour and had even attempted suicide. At this point in the interview my notes indicate that the respondent's voice became very low, and I was unable to capture word for word what was actually said. I wondered if her voice became low due to the nature of the discussion, if she felt she was breaching confidentiality. Or was it because of the difficulty in talking about the sensitive nature inherent in sexual assault and family violence? I then described for her a similar incident that had occurred at my workplace where a preteen girl, approximately 12 years of age, had attempted and had threatened to attempt suicide and how our staff had felt that perhaps sexual assault was a contributing cause along with family violence.

Although I did not have an opportunity to observe preteens or teenagers during my two observational periods, the statements made by these child-and-youth workers could be validated through other research done by (Jaffe et al., 1990; Peled et al., 1995; and Martin, 1996). Martin, in her ethnographic accounts of women who have experienced spousal abuse, discusses some of the behavioural effects on children who witness this family violence. One mother related to Martin the effects of the family violence her daughter had experienced:

She had a school phobia. It was real and it still is. She cannot handle any kind of stress. She gets migraines like me. . . . She just wouldn't respect anything or anyone at the school. She would just do her own thing. . . . We'd get something set up and she'd get started and then she'd take off and they wouldn't take her back. She took pills—she had to have her stomach pumped. . . . From the age of twelve, Stephanie has had a series of boyfriends, all much older. She ran away for a while and then brought home a fellow who was eight years older. (p. 100)

Martin goes on to describe how the mother finally had to ask her daughter and her boyfriend to leave the house. When they left, they took some extremely valuable
possessions such as family jewellery and a coin collection worth $5,000. The mother told Martin that it was "the worst night of my life. I felt betrayed" (p. 101).

Again it is important to remember that while these behavioural examples can be anticipated in children who have witnessed family violence, not all children manifest the same effects. I know from my work experience that I often recall children who exhibit these reactions to violence between their parents. The problem with this is that children whose behaviour seems exemplary can be ignored when workers are too involved with those who are more extreme. Children who display model behaviour may internalize their pain and thus receive no attention or help.

Socialization

In simplistic terms, socialization, as outlined by Abercrombie et al. (1988), can be described as a process in which individuals learn to conform to society's norms. This process makes it possible for society to successfully transmit its culture from one generation to the next. Abercrombie et al. discuss three stages of socialization:

...the primary stage involves the socialization of the young child in the family; the secondary stage involves the school; and the third stage is adult socialization, when actors enter roles for which primary and secondary socialization may not have prepared them fully (for example, becoming an employee, a husband or wife, a parent). (p. 231)

This perspective on socialization has been applied to family violence by researchers, psychologists, and counsellors working in the field. Shelter workers and counsellors have labelled this the "intergenerational cycle," psychologists talk about it in terms of "learned behaviour" or "learned helplessness," and others have referred to it as a "social learning model."
In my questionnaire, I asked respondents to rank in order of importance what they thought were the major causes of family violence (see Appendix A). All respondents saw a partner's desire to be dominate as the number-one cause. Eight respondents rated childhood experiences as the number-two cause.

Both childhood experience and a person's desire to be dominant can be equated with socialization. Shelter employees and others working with child victims of family violence have adopted this theory to explain why children grow up to become abusers or victims. They assume that if young children see one parent dominate the other verbally, physically, financially, or otherwise, they learn how to relate to others in future relationships. Furthermore, if the child witnesses one parent accept the dominant behaviour of the other parent, then he or she learns that this is the appropriate way to react as an adult spouse and parent.

In answers to the questionnaire, a number of respondents mentioned the importance of breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence. The respondents suggested that if there is no intervention with children who witness family violence, they will grow up to become abusers and victims. One respondent actually stated: "Child witnesses are not acknowledged as abused by society. Society needs to realize children who witness abuse are being abused themselves and will grow up to be abusers or victims."

This quote is typical of what many shelter workers, counsellors, and others working in the field of family violence utilize as a framework for their work. However, there are many other factors at work in this issue, and socialization of children may be only one reason why children grow up to become abusers or victims. I learned from my literature review that there are many theories, that a multidimensional approach to the issue is required, and that there is always new research on the horizon.

For example, at a conference I attended in April 1999, the keynote speaker, a psychology professor named Beverly Bourget from Sudbury's Laurentian University, related her research with children who live in hostile situations such as family violence.
She indicated that experiences early in life can affect the wiring of a child's adult brain. In her speech, she focused on the impact exposure to violence can have on children. She said that 80 percent of the women consulted reported their children had been in the home while abuse occurred. Trauma is an exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous stimuli overwhelm a child's coping abilities. Since the core wiring of a child's brain occurs during his first three years of life, the infant will likely suffer permanent damage because of his regular exposure to hostile situations. At birth a baby has all his brain cells. While most are not developed, they have potential. For optimum brain development a child needs adequate nutrition, a safe environment, loving, nurturing, and positive mental stimulation. If an infant does not receive positive stimulation, his brain cells simply die. Primary prevention is the ultimate solution, and early treatment when the brain is still developing can counteract some of the damage.

Although I have not read Bourget's research and findings, her comments during her speech did demonstrate to me that shelter workers, counsellors, and others in the field of family violence require an understanding of both biological and environmental factors, and that no single explanation can give meaning to this complex phenomenon. Perhaps Bourget's research illustrates why some children exposed to family violence do not grow up to become abusers and victims. If, in the early stages of their childhood while their brains are developing, they receive proper stimulation and are not exposed to family violence, it may be feasible to assume that their chances of leading nonviolent lives are much higher.

During one of my field observations, I heard a comment by one of the younger boys. In the course of playing a game, he collected tools to help break into the jewel keeper's room. He said to his partner, "Use this tool to beat him up." This child was approximately four years old, and although no one said anything to him, I wondered where he had picked up this language. I also wondered if he had heard his father speak this way.

Although I mentioned this comment under child behaviour, I feel it is compelling enough to reiterate for two reasons. First, at a shelter for abused women, there is zero
tolerance of abusive or violent acts whether verbal, emotional, or physical. In this case, the young boy's comments were verbal, and I was surprised and alarmed that the child-and-youth worker, the volunteer, and a student placement who were present when the boy made the statement neglected to address his comments. Second, it indicates to me that children's behaviour is closely connected to the socialization factors or the "intergenerational cycle" often referred to by child advocates and other professionals in the field of family violence. It is probable that this child had heard comments such as this made by his father to his mother.

In my interviews with the workers in the family centre and the three shelters, we also discussed this intergenerational cycle. These workers strongly believe that if the cycle can be broken the child will not grow up to become a perpetrator or victim of violence. At one shelter I asked a worker about how witnessing abuse can lead to symptoms of posttraumatic stress. She replied:

Yeah, that's right, and we're also talking about an intergenerational cycle as well with abuse. These children—we know that abuse is a learned behaviour. It's not something we're born with. We're not born to be that aggressive or whatever in terms of, you know, an abuser, and the same applies to the victim. We're not born to be victims. We have to have learned that behaviour from somewhere. Children grow up in a family where that's happening. I mean, what's happening is that the girls are identifying with their mothers, the victims, and the boys are identifying with their fathers, who are the abusers, and that's why that intergenerational cycle just keeps repeating itself. It's because they're learning these behaviours. They're learning what their role is in a relationship and they're perpetuating it to keep the pattern going. I guess that's one of the reasons I really do this job. I think, to some degree, we have some effect on them, that we say, no, it's not okay, and that we do not have to repeat that pattern, that it can be changed. You have to shift their perception on it, and that's easier said than done because they're still influenced by their parents. We have no way to say for sure that if mom leaves this abusive relationship, that she will not get into another one or return to the other one. The statistics say those sorts of things, but the reality may be that in this short period they spend here, they hear it enough that this is not okay and this is not what a relationship should be about. It maybe sinks in a little bit. [At this point the respondent laughed, then sighed.]
Another respondent at a different shelter talked about the intergenerational cycle in terms of family breakdown. I asked her if she thought the intergenerational cycle was one of the reasons family violence exists, if it is a prevalent cause, or if it's not really that important. She said:

Yeah, I definitely think that people respond to things as an adult based on their experience and their upbringing. They may handle a conflict with a more aggressive way. The whole concept of family seems to have changed, so I think that's why we see more and more breakdowns in relationships. There's a lot more pressure on society, too, but then, in the end it, goes back to the family. If the family isn't intact and they can't handle it, then the children don't get that role modelling. They don't get that positive kind of reinforcement for them to develop other ways of handling themselves and they're not encouraged to express their feelings. They are taught more to hide and be deceitful. So I'm sure that is the core of it.

I also asked this particular child advocate about sons seeing their fathers abusing their mothers, and daughters witnessing their mothers being abused. She responded:

Sure, and yes, unless there's something really drastic to change where mom does end up saying, "I've had enough," and leaves. Then the children give her a hard time quite often because it is different than what they've experienced, so it'll take a lot for her to convince them this is right and that she means business, that dad needs to change, too. But you see a young teenage boy go out on a date, and even though he's seen at home how dad treats mom and he doesn't like it and he's been quite upset, you'll quite often see him treat his girlfriend the same. So to look at the behaviour and label it as abusive, I think, is the step needed and not always taken because there's not always intervention there.

Another respondent talked about how she saw "raising children as the single most important job on this planet." She also talked about one of her favourite authors, Marion Williamson, who has written numerous books that speak of the role women and children play in North American society and how they are undervalued:

She [Williamson] uses a term that "wounded children become wounded adults and wounded adults really mess the planet," and I think that she's absolutely right.
What happens is that these children grow up to be adults and the cycle continues and continues. We also say that the cycle of violence needs to end and the best place to end it is with the children, but we're not doing that. We're still trying to work on adults who are already wounded, who will come to terms with their issues when they are ready. So we can't force the issue. But the ones who we can change and who are the ones most highly influenced are the ones we're ignoring. So I don't know!

Respondents at another shelter concurred with statements made by the above child advocates. They agreed that children seem to be the "forgotten ones" and said "that's the time you can make some change and that it's a learned behaviour."

I asked them what they thought about Marion Williamson's phrase concerning wounded children. One woman said, "It's on our bulletin board! I don't know where it came from." Then she left the room. When she returned, she had another quotation that had been pinned to the shelter's bulletin board, but didn't know where it had come from: "Children are not children. They're just younger people. And to ignore the state of children is to ignore the state of our world."

The counsellor at the family centre I visited also commented on the intergenerational cycle:

Yeah, and all the research says that these children need good role models, need outlets. They need to be able to move away from a traumatic situation and to be able to reinvest in normal development, and the mothers need to be involved with that if the cycle is to be stopped.

As indicated by the comments of the shelter workers I interviewed, notions such as "wounded children become wounded adults" conceivably provide a one-theory explanation of what happens to children who experience violence in the home. The family-centre counsellor, on the other hand, spoke about the intergenerational cycle in terms of normal development in a biological context as opposed to environmental or
socialization factors. Again these differences suggest the variety of dynamics at stake in this issue.

The family-centre counsellor shared another perspective on the intergenerational cycle. She said we often generalize things and that not all children who have witnessed family violence perpetuate the cycle. I asked her if she saw this as a self-fulfilling prophecy. She replied:

I think that children can sometimes become very traumatized and still become wonderful, productive individuals. I think it's often too easy for us to say, "Oh, that family had abuse, so that's what's going to happen." We really need to help the mothers and the children so it doesn't happen. My concern is that the media will sometimes see it that way. But I would believe that the shelter worker would not be seeing it that way because the shelter worker working in a shelter feels or believes that she can make a difference. But we have to be very careful with that language because language creates perceptions, so we have to be very careful how we present things, because we're going to shift how people perceive things.

The child-and-youth worker I interviewed largely agreed with the family-centre counsellor on the subject of the intergenerational-cycle theory. Although she acknowledged that it was important, she, too, felt that applying it to all children was not really fair. I asked her about the "wounded children become wounded adults" concept, and she replied:

I think that's often the case, but I think there's enough kids that people have turned right around, too. Sometimes the resiliency of people who have been hurt [allows them to] find some strength, whether it be externally offered for them to grow on or whether it's just something inside of them. They have more fight in them, and often those will become the people most likely to give I think. But the ones who have been the most hurt or injured don't find those comfort levels. Then they're definitely still seeking that attention from people about their hurt and, until they do, can't move on. Yeah, to avoid more future problems I would love to see more preventative. Because I think that's the key to turn things around, you know—an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
Many children have experienced family violence and still grow up to become productive adults. Earlier in this paper I described my own experience with a family that had three generations' worth of violence in the home, yet one daughter managed to escape the cycle and go on to become a college graduate. To date, unlike her mother, two sisters, and one sister's child, she has not returned to our hostel. Perhaps the teenage daughter who escaped had enough inner strength, along with some external support from our hostel, to continue schooling so that she could pull herself out of the cycle.

The intergenerational cycle, as suggested by two of my respondents, cannot be generalized. However, Martin, in her book *The Narrow Doorway*, discusses a number of examples in which this cycle exists. Martin gives 10 accounts of women who survived extensive abuse from their male partners, then reinterviews them 10 years later to see how they and their children are doing. In one case, a mother talks about her daughter and son:

Laurie's a lot like her father. You can never trust her and she don't always tell the truth. She plays mind games. She's even punched me. I can't take it anymore so I made her leave. My son tried to get in at 2:30 in the mornin' last week but he was drunk and I didn't let him in. They won't let me alone. Sometimes I think it will never end. (p. 75)

The mother is referring to the cycle of violence. In all probability, the daughter's behaviour follows the pattern displayed by her father. Most likely, the violence these children experienced will have a major impact on the relationships they have with future children and spouses of their own.

**Funding**

During the course of my research, I discovered that inadequate funding for children has a direct bearing on why they are voiceless when it comes to family violence. Through
my interviews with and questionnaire responses from child advocates at the shelters and the family centre, it became even clearer that reduced funding leads to Band-Aid programming and services.

Of course, from a physical or aesthetic perspective, the facilities of the two shelters I visited seemed more than adequate, particularly the child-care rooms. My field notes after seeing one shelter read:

In the child-care room, I was able to scan the environment while waiting for the night's activities to begin. There was everything imaginable for children from larger therapeutic equipment such as a sand/water table to stuffed animals and age-appropriate toys and games. The walls were covered with the children's posters. The room gave me a feeling of pleasantness, that it was a fun place to be.

My notes from the tour of the second shelter state:

Although I did not get to see or observe any children, the two areas where these workers would work with the children were well laid out with many therapeutic pieces of equipment to be used for children to climb on as well as a large house to play in, sand/water tables, and many other age-appropriate toys.

These two areas were obviously thought out and designed to attract the children into participation in any activities that the child-and-youth workers might want to conduct. The one area for the children was on the main floor in a very large open space. This open space contained a large kitchen, dining room, lounge with TV, a reading area, and the children's play area. This enabled the children to play and still see where mom was at all times. The second area was in the basement and was used when the counsellors for the women were doing group work on the main floor. Overall, the physical layout of the shelter felt warm, welcoming, and conducive to the activities that are carried out in shelters.

A well-designed and well-planned children's room in a shelter or hostel is important for three reasons. First, it helps with the adjustment period children undergo when they come to the facility. In most cases, they have left violent home environments very quickly. Their mothers have had no opportunity to bring sufficient clothing for
them, much less their favourite toys and possessions. The presence of toys and equipment in a special room or area helps children with this transitional period.

Second, the type of equipment and toys is crucial during this period. Sand boxes, for example, provide children with something to play in that is tactile and helps them to relax after the traumatic experiences they have witnessed in a violent home. Climbing toys, exercise floor mats, and water tables provide them with safe and appropriate opportunities to be physical, which can release repressed anger or feelings of hurt and pain. Paints and special colouring books can also serve as outlets to express their emotions.

Finally, the child-care room and the various equipment it contains allow child advocates to observe casually how children react and interact with one another and with inanimate objects. As a result of these observations, child-and-youth workers can then design a case-management plan for each child while he or she is in the shelter or hostel.

When I asked workers at two shelters about their child-care equipment, they explained that the large therapeutic and age-appropriate furnishings, such as tables for homework, had been sponsored by service clubs. They also said that private citizens and community toy and food drives greatly aided their shelters in maintaining special child-care rooms.

The funding they receive from Ontario's Ministry of Community and Social Services does not include the extra dollars needed for therapeutic equipment, furnishings, and toys of this nature. Both shelters are grateful for the generosity of service clubs, private citizens, and other community groups that support the work they do with children.

The hostel I work at also receives no government funding for children's toys, special equipment, and furnishings. We were given a $3,000 donation from one private group, which enabled us to furnish our special area for children. My hostel also relies on private citizens and community food and toy drives to maintain a small space children can
call their own. Unlike shelters, though, we receive no funding for children's programming; therefore, we have to leave children to their own devices in our child-care room. Often this leads to destruction of equipment due to inappropriate behaviour on the part of children who have experienced violence and receive no supervision from a child advocate to assist them in learning appropriate behaviour during their play activities.

Shelters receive funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, which allocates money based on a budget request from each shelter's administrative staff. This request for funding from the ministry covers what shelters call "soft services" such as counselling, support programs, outreach work, and follow-ups. A shelter's budget request also includes services and programs for children who use its facilities.

In recent years, particularly since 1995, Mike Harris's government has cut the funding of Violence Against Women's programs. In my discussions with respondents during interviews and through my questionnaire, I discovered that programs and services for women and children had been adversely affected by these cuts. However, child advocates felt children were the most severely affected. One respondent, a child-and-youth worker at a shelter, believes the lack of adequate funding stems from society's undervaluation of children:

We average anywhere between 10 and 18 children, which is always way more children than the women we have. We have a third of the programming for children than the women have. The women's program has six full-time workers and nine part-time workers. We have two full-time workers and two part-time workers. We also have a children's outreach worker, but when the budget cuts came in this year, we eliminated that. So what does that say? Now I realize that the shelter in terms of this agency does not have a say in that. It is not our views on that issue, but the reality is we have a government that undervalues children to a point that children's caseworkers or child-and-youth workers and outreach workers in a shelter do not carry any kind of important weight. We are working with sometimes between 18 and 20 children, and there is only the part-time and one other full-time person covering all these children. So we need to get to the issues. We need to deal with children one-on-one. We cannot possibly do that—and I say that speaks to the fact that people living in this society undervalue children.
Although two child-and-youth workers I interviewed at another shelter were not as informed about funding issues as some of my other interviewees were, they still felt funding was a major problem. My field notes from this interview suggest these respondents have a lot of tension in their work environment:

I did sense some reluctance on the part of the respondents to discuss certain issues around their workplace in a union environment, especially around financial and statistical information. In fact, at one point in the interview the two workers specifically asked that I not repeat certain comments related to their layoffs and how they had been treated by management when they attempted to get what was rightfully owed to them. I assured them that this would not be reported. I also sensed they felt they were undervalued by not only management, but by their other work colleagues, as well. For example, they were asked to babysit when a counsellor needed to work with a mother. In fact, on one of their layoffs the senior child-and-youth worker reported that she had been called in the day after she had been laid off to do just that. I had a sense that these two workers felt almost nonexistent and perhaps isolated in their work. However, in many other ways they were very knowledgeable about children and provided me with many experiences of children who had witnessed family violence.

Although the funding knowledge of the above child-and-youth workers was limited based on restrictions imposed by management, they did have some general comments related to budget issues. "I may not be here," one respondent told me. "There's going to be a layoff. It's the funding. . . . They are laying off only child-care workers." And the other respondent said, "It seems no one cares."

I then asked both respondents if they thought they would be laid off. "Yeah," one said, "cutbacks with the Harris government." Then I asked if they believed other shelter workers would be laid off. One respondent said, "Probably not." The other replied, "Well, they won't be. There's . . . we have funding for it that's the big question. We haven't lost any funding for child support."

At this point I sensed their reluctance to talk freely. I assured them once again that their views would not be reported. A number of issues came up with these two
respondents concerning funding, but I had promised I would not report their personnel issues and concerns so as not to jeopardize their positions.

Next, I turned our interview in another direction and asked about second-stage housing for women and children who have experienced family violence. I knew from media reports, other professionals in the field, and my own experience that support services had been reduced by the provincial government. These cuts in services and programs for women and children in second-stage housing had begun in 1995. The two child-and-youth workers told me that the Harris cuts had affected their second-stage housing program adversely through the elimination of counsellors. As a result, the program was converted into housing of a primary rather than a second-stage type.

Second-stage housing in Ontario was originally developed by former governments to accommodate mothers and their children in apartments for periods of six to 12 months. Mothers and children who experience family violence can only stay in shelters for about six weeks, so second-stage housing gives them a longer-term solution after they leave. Furthermore, the support component of second-stage housing provides women and children with further counselling and other services in a safe environment.

The Bob Rae NDP government, which preceded Mike Harris's administration, had approved additional second-stage housing projects in areas where there were no existing services for women and children who had experienced family violence. In my own region, one such project was approved for 60 apartments, but was cancelled as soon as Harris became premier.

The counsellor I interviewed at the family centre talked about her facility's funding. She also discussed funding in general for her region and how the Harris cutbacks had directly impacted the ability to provide services for children in Eastern Ontario:

We have one position that's funded through the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Our program has annualized funding for children in the community who have witnessed family abuse. We still have a lot of children who are looking for service, and there's a continuing cutback in service rather than a growth in
services. There was a pilot project to go out to the schools to do some work for children who had witnessed family abuse, but that's been cut back and they no longer offer that program. Other groups have received onetime funding to run one series of groups and then that was cut. So actually what we're seeing is an erosion of the services for the children rather than an expansion. . . . There's a program here, but it's often not accessible due to the demand for the service that they can provide. So that's where families run into difficulty. We're funded for short-term counselling, and the waiting lists of some long-term facilities are closed, so children can't even go on the waiting lists now.

At this point I asked the counsellor if she felt funding was different in other areas of Ontario. She said, "I think we're feeling it everywhere. Even in the referral and advocacy we do. There's not as much available and in the summer even less."

She went on to discuss the importance of having summer activities available for children. Otherwise, she said, "You get a mother with four children in an apartment all summer and somebody's going to be losing a screw or two." She further commented that:

Last year we could phone people up and say this is what we need. This person has a low income, we filled in a form. This year we're writing scads of letters. There's a lot more time writing letters for each of these people and their subsidies are lower each month, so the women are again less apt to get the network of supportive services their children need.

In my questionnaire, I asked respondents if they felt children were adequately acknowledged in dealing with family violence. Two questionnaire respondents directly linked the lack of funding to the fact that children's needs are not being met. One said, "Due to provincial funding cuts, core services will be the catchphrase with children being excluded from this." Another respondent stated, "There is a need for more outreach of child advocates and counselling, but [we] cannot facilitate this need due to inadequate funding and resources."

A 1989 Vis-a-Vis survey of shelters for battered women across Canada found that funding is a key issue. The survey reported that shelters receive most of their grants from
provincial government ministries of social services. Such grants cover only a part of the amount needed. As an example, the report cited a shelter in British Columbia that had estimated its total operating costs at $200,000, yet it only received $100,000 from the government.

Although the shelter cited in the *Vis-a-Vis* survey is only one facility in British Columbia, I feel the findings hold true in Ontario, as well. Since 1989, shelters and hostels in Ontario have experienced further funding cuts, as mentioned by my interview and questionnaire respondents and as indicated by my own experience working in a hostel. Between 1991 and 1994, funding cuts from COMSOC at our hostel and supportive housing program were approximately five percent per year, necessitating a reduction of staff from six to five. In 1995 our staff was reduced to one counsellor. In this last reduction, we lost our two child-and-youth workers, which severely undermined our ability to provide support, counselling, referral, and advocacy to children using both of our housing programs. As one respondent in Eastern Ontario told me, "What we are seeing is an erosion of the services for the children rather than an expansion."

*Provision of Services*

One of the prominent themes that emerged in four interviews, two observations, and 10 questionnaire responses was the provision of services for children in shelters or hostels. The definition of services for children can be difficult at best, since my research respondents had different descriptions for them. For some, services included programs such as crafts, games, and special outings. For others, they included the aforementioned programs along with age-appropriate activities such as teen or homework groups. A few described services as having a counselling or crisis-intervention component in conjunction with appropriate referral and advocacy policies. Others talked about outreach programs
for children who had used their facility. One children's shelter saw itself as offering clinical and therapeutic services.

These findings are consistent with those of Hughes and Marshall (1995). They concluded that

it is not always possible to know what is included in a children's program in terms of assistance and advocacy. Programs range widely in sophistication and complexity. On one end of the continuum may be a program with staff who meet with the child occasionally in a child-care role. At the other end may be a children's advocate with advanced training in child and family therapy who oversees a well-funded, secure program. (p. 122)

Two other issues that emerged in my findings were the diversity in education of the staff working with these children in shelters and hostels and the lack of sufficient service to children who have experienced or witnessed family violence versus the services available to women in such facilities. It is important to note here that, for providers, the word service is interchangeable with the word program. Since service translates into assistance for children, respondents often described their services as programs they offered to children who were victims of family violence.

Since services seemed to be a major issue for those working with children in shelters or hostels, I decided to break their comments on these issues into four subthemes. These consist of (a) who provides services and what is their accreditation and/or experience? (b) what services or programs do these shelters and hostels provide? (c) what is the duration of time available to provide these services or programs? and (d) what is the ratio of child advocates to numbers of children versus the ratio of women's caseworkers to numbers of women using a shelter or hostel?
(a) **Who provides services and what is their accreditation and/or experience?**

I asked my questionnaire respondents to describe what qualifications and/or experiences their child-care staff had. I received responses from 10 shelters and hostels in Ontario. Since my sample only represents 10 percent of the 96 shelters and hostels in Ontario, it cannot be generalized. However, drawing on my own experience in the field and the knowledge gleaned through conversations with other workers over the years at different professional functions, I can say that the 10 responses are in all probability indicative of the training and experience of most child-care workers in Ontario shelters and hostels.

Three shelters had staff with undergraduate degrees; one of these had staff at the graduate level. Four shelters had staff with college diplomas. These degrees and diplomas were in social sciences such as psychology, sociology, social work, and human service. Only one facility stated it had staff who had diplomas in child-and-youth work, while another facility had staff with teaching qualifications. Staff experiences were also varied. Three facilities had staff with life experiences, three stated staff had worked with abused women and children or had experience in a residential setting, and one stated staff had crisis-and-counselling experience. One shelter did not respond to this question and another facility simply said its staff's experience/qualifications were diverse.

These responses are similar to what Hughes and Marshall (1995) found. They report that "The backgrounds and training of advocates range from simply liking children but having no formal training, to being preschool or elementary school teachers, to having a professional education in social work or psychology" (p. 127).

My interview respondents also discussed their qualifications and/or experiences. At one shelter two child-and-youth workers did not have any degrees or diplomas. I asked them if they had special training for their positions. They stated: "Professional
development. They send us to workshops if they're out there. They're really good as far as that goes for ongoing training to keep you up on issues."

I then asked if specialized education was a prerequisite when they applied for their positions. One worker responded:

We only had to take specialized child-and-youth training. I believe they're trying to get it in that anybody hired, anybody new, would need something. They just redid the job description, and I just read that in the future, part of the qualifications have to have something to do with social-service-worker courses or has to be like a diploma. But those that are here now don't require this. They've even done it to relief workers, because up to now they haven't had to have anything. Whereas now any more relief workers they hire will have to have either their ECE [early-childhood education] or child-and-youth-worker [qualifications].

At another shelter a respondent stated:

I hold my child-and-youth-worker diploma, and so does she [a reference to the respondent's other full-time colleague]. We kind of talk on what education and where we had it. Some have a special-needs certificate, as well as work with children with special needs. I'm presently working on my B.A. in sociology, so I'm constantly upgrading myself.

A respondent at a hostel discussed her education and defined what makes a child-and-youth worker, a children's caseworker, and a child-care worker different:

I went to a three-year college program that was called Child-Care Work six or seven years ago. I've always thought of the child-care worker as a person working with youth of all ages in all settings. But because daycares are now called childcare centres, and they call their workers child-care workers, it causes a lot of confusion. Also, people doing babysitting, they're doing child care. As far as caseworkers go, I would just see that as a person doing more one-on-one than group. As a child-and-youth worker, you can be working in group-home treatment, schools, and all kinds of settings as a one-on-one caseworker type or as a group, social, recreational, whatever. The difference is the ECE people . . . they don't really realize that those are the ones who work in the daycare. Early-childhood educators sometimes work in programming like crafts and things. It's probably in the name. It's probably low visibility. That course is one that's very intensive and very specific and yet not well-known, it seems. But now they do
have a degree program at Ryerson, I think, that is probably increasing its focus a bit more.

Definitions of work varied from shelter to shelter, as indicated by another worker:

First, I will step back and clarify in terms of our role. We are called child-care, no, children caseworkers, as opposed to child-care workers, which is very much like a child-and-youth worker in that we work with children and youth, but we do cases as opposed to care. What that means is that I have a binder of children's names. I write log notes on each child, so my job is to look at them individually as cases and deal with what their needs are—individual needs, group needs, whatever . . .

I did not ask the counsellor at the family centre what qualifications or experience she had. However, I did notice she had an undergraduate degree in psychology on her office wall. Obviously, from her responses to my questions, she had at least three to five years of experience working in the field of family violence.

(b) What services or programs do these shelters and hostels provide?

Jaffe et al. (1989b), in their report to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, found:

Despite a gradual growing awareness of the adverse impact that exposure to wife battering typically has on children, there have been relatively few specialized programs developed for these children. A survey of Canadian shelters for battered women revealed that only a small minority had any specialized staff or programs available for the children who accompany their mothers to these centres. (pp. 2-3)

According to my field research, the above 1989 statement still seems accurate. In my questionnaire, I asked if children's programming was provided. All 10 facilities said yes, but only nine responded when I asked them to describe their programming. The responses to this question were varied. Each of the nine shelters and hostels responded
differently, but some programs were common such as groups for children, counselling, indoor and outdoor recreational activities, after-school programs, homework clubs, and crafts. One shelter stated that it had a follow-up program with children after their departure. Another shelter offered anger management, self-esteem building, and parenting skills for mothers. One shelter had meetings once a week so that children could discuss issues such as the effects of violence, custody disputes, and life in a shelter. Two shelters mentioned their support and counselling groups and the discussions children engaged in concerning domestic violence. Only one shelter stated that it specialized in one-on-one counselling.

Since it is important that children be recognized when it comes to family violence, I wanted to know if shelters and hostels gave them the opportunity to address their concerns during admission. Women, it appears, are always assisted by crisis workers upon admission, but are children given the same opportunity? I asked my 10 questionnaire respondents to describe their admission procedures for abused women and their children. Nine of the 10 facilities outlined their admission procedures for women. These included filling out admission forms, assessing abuse and safety issues, explaining house rules, identifying needs and goals, and allowing women to determine their priorities and how to reach them. Only two of the nine shelters and hostels mentioned admission procedures for children. One shelter reported that children received information on discipline and were asked about their fears and comprehension of their situations. The other shelter replied that mothers and children were interviewed with a child advocate on hand to assess family needs.

Some of the replies to another query on my questionnaire were directly related to programming and services. One respondent admitted that "generally speaking, there is a lag of service for kids coming from violent environments." Another shelter stated that "with only one child-care advocate [it is] very difficult to meet the needs of all the children." A third respondent replied that "not enough time is available to meet the need
and work with the child. Also [there is] a great lack of service available when they leave the shelter."

My interview respondents were also asked to describe their programs and services for children. At one shelter a respondent commented:

That's a catch-22 at this point because we're trying to do more but we're not really. . . . We've got a parenting program that we're trying to get started when there's both child-care workers in. We're also trying to get a child's group going. Basically, what we do is when they come in we do the intake process, show them what's around, keep them occupied. We do one-on-one work with each child when they come in, and if a situation arises, we can deal with it at that point, but it's not really a lot of what we do.

I then asked if the shelter had teenage programs:

Yeah, we keep getting laid off, so we can't keep doing them. We do groups for that age and one-on-one. We take turns at doing this. But the group is off-site through Children's Aid. They do all the screening and arranging and we cofacilitate the group, but that's really the only thing we do other than the one-on-one stuff we do with the children when they're here. There's no outreach.

At the shelter in the GTA I asked the child caseworker to describe her programs and services based on a typical day:

I familiarize myself with any crises or anything I have to get to first thing in the morning. Then at 9:30 a.m. we have what we call a preschool playtime, and that's when the moms can bring their children under five to preschool playtime and they can spend the next three hours to do whatever they need to do. That's really the only time during the course of a week that we offer any kind of child care. So what we'll do is all kinds of activities with them. We have a children's sand centre. We don't use sand. We use puffed rice, and kids just love that. It's very tactile and they can really play in it. We also have a play centre with a water table, so we fill it up and the kids can do their water play. We've got lots of toys and rubber duckies and everything, so they have a lot of fun with that. Within these two hours we sort of structure it in 20-minute intervals in different play areas, because obviously at that age we're limited with what we can do. By then we've used up all the things. We have quite a variety of Disney movies, so sometimes we'll put on one, or sometimes we'll go outside and do some outside play. By 11 o'clock,
we do snacks and then clean up. Depending on the size of the group, we try to do a couple of one-on-ones with the children. Basically, after that, we write up any kind of significant information about the children [we observed during] preschool playtime, and that takes us to lunch. The afternoon is usually taken up with programming for activity night. If there's a craft activity in the evening, the morning shift will get stuff ready for the person in the evening so they don't have to do a lot of prep time. The evening tends to be quite a busier shift than the day time because you're more or less covering off phones, as you don't have the secretary for support.

The activities described by the above child-and-youth worker suggest children are grouped together for a range of activities, indicating that little or no opportunity is available for individualized work with specific children. The respondent even stated that the size of the group of children dictated how many one-on-ones could be achieved.

She also said afternoons were spent organizing programs for the evening child-and-youth worker, since that person had to help other staff answer phones. Based on this respondent's comments, it would seem that very little actual time is spent with children, since workers are frequently engaged in other activities such as preparing programs, cleaning up after programs, keeping records, and answering telephones. Furthermore, activities are planned for an entire group of children, leaving little time for individualized support for each child.

Group activities for children are important because they provide opportunities to learn how to get along with other children. Any outbursts of inappropriate behaviour can be addressed immediately. However, it is equally important to spend individualized time with each child. Although the above description of a typical day's events is only specific to one particular shelter, I discovered through my questionnaire, interviews, and observations that similar circumstances exist in other shelters and hostels.

The family-centre counsellor also described her facility's programs and services for children. These are much more formal and specialized than those undertaken at the three shelters and one hostel where I did interviews. The family counsellor reported:
We have a series of groups for the children and also groups for the mothers, and we service some families individually and some children individually. We run groups for the children and one group for the mothers. We also developed a drop-in last summer for mothers and children during summertime. I think another thing that we see that is most successful is that we run groups at the same time for the mothers and the children. The mothers come and they walk down the hall to their group and the child walks down the hall to his or her group.

The family centre's programs involve families more as a whole, while child-and-youth workers in shelters and hostels have roles that are distinct from those of their colleagues who work with mothers. Hughes and Marshall (1995) suggest that

the capabilities of advocates and the focus of programming provided would vary as well. Highly trained advocates are likely to provide themselves more of the services needed by the family. Other advocates more often refer family to other community agencies and programs. (pp. 127-28)

Although I only talked with staff in one family centre, I think it is safe to say that such facilities employ more highly trained advocates who can specialize and work with entire families. Shelters and hostels, on the other hand, often employ less highly trained advocates who are forced to divide their time between mothers and children, as suggested by Hughes and Marshall (1995).

(c) What is the duration of time available to provide these services and programs?

Since family violence often exists for a number of years before a mother finally decides to leave a relationship, children, too, are exposed to violence for a long time. Unfortunately, this can often mean that children learn how to deal with issues and problems by employing violence. In effect, even after their mothers leave bad relationships, children often display inappropriate behaviour when they deal with school peers, younger siblings, and even their mothers.
It is important to realize that intervention for children at shelters and hostels is short-term. All too often children leave facilities with only a few days or weeks of intervention. I asked respondents at the 10 shelters and hostels in my survey what was the average length of stay per client. Their responses ranged from 13 days to 20 weeks, which averaged out to seven weeks per family.

Respondents at two shelters and one hostel had similar comments concerning length of stay. At the first shelter one worker stated, "I'm not sure what it is here. I think it's around two weeks." A second respondent at the same shelter said, "Yeah, I think that's about it. It's not very often they stay the full six weeks. I mean there is . . . some of them do, but it's not common."

At the second shelter a child-and-youth worker responded:

The average stay this year was higher than last year and previous years. I think it was 33 days, which is three to four weeks, and that's a very short time to be able to get a lot of that through—that message! It's not that they can't stay for that long. They can stay for two months and possibly longer, depending on each family's circumstances. Now if a child stays for eight weeks, within that eight-week period we can accomplish basic kinds of things and . . . do all the things we want to do.

A worker at the hostel did not express the length of stay in terms of weeks or days. I asked her if she felt outreach was needed for children when they left a shelter or hostel. She stated:

Yeah, I don't think it's right to put a child in with someone that they sort of get really comfortable with, and then in the end they can't carry through. So I think there's certain things that can be done, and the children can sense sincerity and genuine caring and be with them, too, and all those things.

The counsellor at the family centre stated that service for children consisted of a 12-week intensive program. However, the number of children that could be worked with
during this period was only nine per session or 36 per year. I asked her if she felt enough children were being served. She replied:

It's not really enough. We've got a waiting list of over 60 clients, and that's a waiting list that's not diminishing! On top of that, there's a referral in the wider community for some of the children who are witnessing family violence.

I then asked her if she felt the 12-week program was long enough. She stated:

For some it is. For some it's never enough. For those, we have a number of options. We can continue to offer individual counselling here. We also refer them to where they can stay longer periods. Then we refer them also to other children's groups. There are some children who have been so traumatically moved that even more intervention is needed on a daily basis for a month at a time on a regular basis.

The duration of time for the provision of services to children was a large problem for my questionnaire respondents, but a secondary concern was the amount of time available to provide these services. All the respondents reported they had 24-hour service. Nine of the 10 facilities I sent questionnaires to had child-and-youth workers, and eight of the nine responded. Their replies ranged from seven to 12.5 hours a day, which averaged out to 10.8 hours a day. However, the women in all of these facilities got 24-hour service!

My interview respondents also expressed concerns about the amount of time they had available each day to work with children. At one shelter there were two child-and-youth workers and each person did 30 hours per week for a total of 60 hours. However, these hours were different each day, as one worker indicated:

Between the two of us, one works Wednesday to Saturday and the other Sunday to Wednesday. . . . It's only been that way about a year. . . . Some days we work mornings and other days evenings. Wednesday only we have 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. coverage.
At the one hostel where I conducted an interview the child-and-youth worker puts in a 40-hour week over a five-day period. This particular employee is also expected to work with not only the children in the hostel, but also with the children in the facility's nonprofit supportive-housing program and other housing programs, which include transitional housing for both single women and abused women, as well as long-term housing in a rent-geared-to-income building.

This means that her 40-hour work week is divided between housing programs available not only to abused women and their children, but to women and children who are the victims of poverty, eviction, addiction, and homelessness. As a result of funding arrangements for this facility, the child-and-youth worker is required to spend most of her 40-hour work week with the children in the supportive-housing program. Any time that remains is devoted to limited programs with children who use the hostel and/or its other housing programs.

The hostel child-and-youth worker said that the amount of time available to children who have witnessed or experienced family violence is limited. She stated that "from two to three hours every other day or nine hours a week is the maximum." She also said that "on occasion, if time permits, I am able to work with children from the hostel on a one-one-one basis, but only in cases of extreme behavioural problems."

Another shelter has a much better complement of employees for children: two full-time and two part-time caseworkers. The two full-time workers put in five-day weeks for a total of 70 hours per week, and alternate between days and evenings with some overlap time. The two part-time workers are called in for weekends if needed or when large numbers of children use the shelter. They also fill in when full-time workers are sick or on vacation. The part-timers do outreach work, too.

In an interview, one of the child-and-youth workers at this facility stated that due to Harris government funding cuts, one part-time worker would have to be laid off.
Furthermore, she said, "We also had a children's outreach worker, but when the budget cuts came, we eliminated that worker."

The two full-time workers are expected to conduct one program in the morning and one in the evening for children. They also have to do public relations such as going out to schools to talk with children about violence in the family.

The programs for children at this shelter consist of two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. The rest of the full-timers' time is taken up with program preparation, cleanup after activities, public relations work in the community, administrative tasks, fundraising and, "if time permits, some one-on-one counselling with children."

As suggested by two questionnaire respondents, more time and more staff are needed to respond adequately to the concerns of children who use shelters and hostels. One respondent stated that not enough time was available to work with children. The other respondent reported that with only one child-care advocate it was very difficult to meet the needs of all children.

(d) What is the ratio of child advocates to numbers of children versus the ratio of women's caseworkers to numbers of women using a shelter or hostel?

In my questionnaire, I asked respondents how many beds they had. The replies ranged from 10 to 30 beds, which averaged out to 22 beds for the 10 shelters and hostels surveyed. I also asked how many children, on average, used their facilities in any given month. The responses varied from eight to 15 children, for an average of 12, which translated into 59 percent of all residents using these beds. I also asked what percentage of children who had experienced family violence used their facilities. Responses ranged from seven shelters and hostels reporting 100 percent to three shelters and hostels reporting 98 percent, 90 percent, and 70 percent respectively. For all 10 facilities, this meant that 96 percent of the children came from homes where family violence exists.
Although I did not ask the questionnaire respondents to report how many caseworkers they had for women using their facilities, I did ask how many child-and-youth workers they had. One of the 10 had no specialized workers, and the remaining eight reported a range of one to five workers, which averaged out to 2.3 workers per facility. The remaining establishment reported that it used regular staff, volunteers, and student placements to provide services and programs as necessary for these children.

Since it seemed, from my questionnaire, that there was a high ratio of children (59 percent) versus women using these shelters, I wanted to explore that ratio. Therefore, in my interviews, I asked employees at two shelters and one hostel what their ratios were. The intent was not to minimize the importance of the support needed by these women, but to determine if children were given equivalent help.

A respondent at one shelter stated:

We average anywhere between 10 and 18 children, which is always way more children than we have women. We have a third of the program that the women have in the children's program. We're a 27-bed facility. Most shelters have five to 10 beds. So 27 beds is pretty big for a shelter. However, our ratio of children's caseworkers is still relevant to other shelters that have five to 10 beds and one worker. We have 27 beds and only two full-time youth workers and two part-time youth workers. They [women] have six full-time workers and nine part-time workers.

Another shelter respondent stated:

We have a 17-bed capacity and two child workers. But there's only really one of us here a day, and we really never know how many will be children from day to day. I think the ratio of children we see is 68 percent children to the rest women. When you look at runs through the shelter in a year, 68 percent of those are children. So we see more children through the year than we do women. For the women, we have four full-time [workers] and then a bunch of relief, I believe.
The hostel worker I interviewed was expected to divide her 40-hour work week among several housing programs. When asked about ratios, she replied:

There are 35 beds here for all women and children. Of these 35 beds, approximately 50 percent, or 17 beds, are used by abused women and their children. At most times this means that there are four or five mothers using beds, and the remainder of the 17 beds, which is 11 or 12, are occupied by their children who have experienced family violence. This means that 68 percent of our beds are being used by children from family violence. Because of my responsibilities at the second-stage supportive-housing program, I need to divide my time between two distinct groups. My role as the only child-and-youth worker is really to provide services full-time to the second-stage housing program. However, I do approximately nine hours per week at the hostel. This means both groups of children are compromised in providing a quality of service, especially to those in the crisis hostel environment.

Clearly, based on the four factors identified by my respondents, it is difficult to provide adequate services or programs for these children. From my findings, it would appear economic cuts have reduced or eroded services for children at shelters and hostels. According to my respondents and the available literature on the issue, this trend is truly unfortunate when we consider how important it is to break the cycle of family violence by starting with children who are rendered voiceless in such matters in our society.

Cultural Implications

As I did my research, I did not think a great deal about the culture that exists in hostels and shelters, and how this impacts on women and children who seek safety in them. Two issues became apparent from my discussions with child-and-youth workers, from responses made in the questionnaire, and from the literature I reviewed.

The first issue involved the goals and objectives utilized by shelters and hostels. In order to meet their goals and objectives, such facilities implement certain policies and procedures that often interfere with individual and cultural differences.
Since my interviews were open-ended, a number of unexpected concerns and problems were expressed by the respondents. The child advocates discussed the difficulties they experienced in providing services to a diverse group of women and children. These respondents outlined in detail their concerns about language barriers, dietary differences, and other cultural variances related to child-rearing practices and beliefs.

A shelter or hostel can be described as a subculture. Studies exist that discuss certain subcultures present within the dominant culture, such as youth gangs, the military, monasteries, and so on. The goal of the subculture is to have its members develop a "system of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and life-styles of a social group which is distinct from, but related to the dominant culture of a society" (Abercrombie et al., 1984, p. 245).

From my research and my own experience, I feel that a subculture exists in the shelter/hostel environment. Goffman's concept of a "total institution" is useful in describing these facilities. As "total institutions," they have adopted a subculture that in many instances ignores the diversity of women and children who require their services. Everyone is treated alike and required to do the same things each day at the same time. This means that these women and children have left one controlling situation only to find themselves in another, albeit safe and free from violence.

Goffman, in Asylums: Essays on the Social Situations of Mental Patients and Other Inmates (1961), describes two processes that exist within the "total institution" that strip individuals of their culture and self-identity. These are "mortification of self" and "contaminative exposure." Goffman argues that a basic social arrangement in modern society is that individuals usually live, work, and play in different places and with different participants and under different authorities, and without an overall rational plan. Total institutions can be described as a breakdown of the barriers that ordinarily separate these three aspects of life. In the total institution all three aspects of life are conducted in the
same location and each activity is carried out with large numbers of others all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing at the same time. Each phase of a day's activities are tightly scheduled. These various enforced activities have been rationally designed by the particular institution in order to fulfill the mandate and philosophy of the institution. (p. 6)

The range of women and children at shelters and hostels is so varied—based on language, socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, beliefs, values, and customs—that facilities cannot respond adequately to individual needs. In order to cater to the many needs of a diverse population, shelters and hostels have to utilize the two management processes described by Goffman—"the mortification of self" and "contaminative exposure"—which often rob individuals of their unique cultural backgrounds.

Shelters and hostels have become "total institutions." The idealistic objective is to provide safety for these women and children from a violent environment. However, the expectations from funders and the imposed restrictions stemming from residential standards and other government regulations can cause shelters to lose sight of their real goals for the women and children they serve.

Goffman says that "mortification of self" involves people entering an establishment and being "stripped of certain stable arrangements in their home world." When they enter a facility, they are also stripped of any supports they had from their previous arrangements (p. 14).

For children, Goffman's concept of "mortification of self" is extremely traumatic. These children have already been exposed to acts of violence between their parents at home, but now they are stripped of their regular home world, which includes friends, schoolteachers, and other family members. Upon entering a shelter or hostel, these children are faced with new rules; expected to change their behaviour; leave their regular school, their father, and their friends; and give up their pets and toys.

The loss of nonphysical possessions that results in a reduction of one's self-identity is also described by Goffman. For safety reasons in shelters or hostels, women
and children are often expected to assume other names, ones that cannot be identified by their spouses and fathers. It is often suggested by shelter staff that the mother think of a name of a friend they had in elementary school that their partner does not know.

Goffman says another management process or method used in total institutions is "contaminative exposure." He argues that there are physical and nonphysical forms of contamination. Nonphysical aspects of contamination include "having to reveal facts and history about oneself to staff, the censoring of mail by staff that residents receive or send, and visits or inspections from officials to the institutions." Goffman's physical aspects include such things as "unclean or unappetizing food, dirty bath facilities, clothing impregnated with previous users' sweat, soiled linens, and so on" (p. 26).

In hostels and shelters, the physical aspects of contamination are no longer as prevalent as they may have been in 1961, due to better public-health standards and newer funding requirements. However, they still exist, given the diversity in populations served. For example, it cannot be guaranteed that over a 24-hour period there will not be dirty bath facilities or unclean areas in shelters and hostels. These problems exist in such facilities because so many different people are served. Not everyone believes in leaving things the way they found them.

Goffman's theory regarding nonphysical forms of contamination provides an understanding of the experience women and children undergo in hostels and shelters. Upon admission, people have to reveal facts about themselves such as financial, medication, and health concerns. They are also exposed, because of government and funding requirements, to visits from public-health, child-welfare, and fire officials, and are subjected to tours by other agencies and by the staff of shelters and hostels.

Another nonphysical aspect of contamination, as described by Goffman, is the curtailing of visits from family and friends. Since the role of the shelter or hostel is to protect women and children from a potentially violent spouse, visits are curtailed or not
allowed at all. This practice is in place to protect the location of the shelter or hostel from others. It also protects the confidentiality of the other residents who use the facility.

It is unfortunate, but in the real world of the shelter or hostel, women and children are exposed to the management processes described by Goffman. At our hostel we, too, impose these restrictions. Children are expected to adopt appropriate behaviour, go to a new school, give up their pets, participate in activities that may or may not be what they want, eat foods they are not accustomed to, give up their former friends and other supports, and reveal personal facts.

Since each day is tightly scheduled for meals, bedtime, curfews, laundry, obtaining supplies, and many other planned activities, women tend to lose control of their children. Often children come to staff, rather than their mothers, for directions.

Although some of these restrictions, such as mealtimes, can be rationalized from a management perspective, my research has made me rethink current practices. For example, why should women and children be subjected to a barrage of in-depth questions about their histories when they are admitted? What purpose does this serve? Perhaps posing questions concerning what we can do and what women and children expect would be more helpful. It would also allow them more control in their own recovery process.

Changing an institutionalized facility into a home away from home is a challenging goal but, as suggested by Goffman, this might be the way to preserve individual culture and self-identity. In fact, during my research, one woman actually said as much. She had visited a number of hostels and shelters to explore the issue of elder abuse, and told me, "I was really impressed with your shelter. It was just like home and not like an institution unlike the others I visited." I asked her why she felt this way, and she replied, "The decor was so homelike, the women were preparing their own meals, and the children were coming and going from the kitchen to pick up their after-school snacks from their mothers." In the other hostels and shelters she had visited, she said these activities were performed by staff and that some facilities felt "very institutional."
A second concern that arose during my research involved the difficulties shelter workers have in providing appropriate services to women and children from diverse ethnic backgrounds. At a shelter in Southwestern Ontario I interviewed two respondents. During our conversation, we talked about the problems shelters face and how they respond to them. The respondents told me how a mother would go to appointments and leave her four-year-old daughter unattended at the shelter. My transcription notes of one of the respondents' comments read:

Remember the woman from Romania and her four-year-old daughter and how she would go out shopping or to appointments and leave her daughter in her room? This necessitated us having to contact Children's Aid. We thought she was just ignoring our rules and was not a good mom leaving her daughter alone. We also had difficulty talking with this woman because she spoke only broken English. In the end, we and Children's Aid got someone to come in who could speak her language. We found out that she was not ignoring our rules and was a good mom. In Romania it was customary for women to go out and leave their children alone. Children's Aid explained our laws to her, and after that she would usually try to find someone to watch her daughter. But occasionally she'd forget and slip into old habits.

At an interview at the hostel in the GTA, a child-and-youth worker and I discussed some of the cultural implications she and her colleagues had to deal with:

One time we had a mother with a young son. I think he was around three years old. She was a really good mom, and her discipline skills were also very good. Her son was such a nice little boy. I can't remember what country she came from, but she often dressed her little boy in pink. Some staff were upset with this, as other children in the hostel would tease him when he wore pink clothes or pink pajamas. Fortunately, one of our staff had taken some extra courses on her own time related to different cultures and was able to tell the rest of the staff that this was normal for women from this country to dress their male children in pink. Once we knew this, we were able to explain to the other residents at the hostel and the teasing became a lot less.

The above two examples indicate that shelter and hostel workers may not be sensitive to cultural differences and are perhaps judgemental of others as a result of their
lack of knowledge. The staff in the shelter located in a small community in Southwestern Ontario probably have less experience with women and children from other ethnic backgrounds. However, the fact that the staff at the GTA hostel are doubtlessly more exposed to other cultures yet, except for one employee, have difficulty understanding different customs leads me to believe that our shelter and hostel workers do not get the necessary training and knowledge to work with diverse groups of women and children. Peled et al. (1995) state:

Traditionally, the needs of white, heterosexual mothers and their children are discussed. The diversity of populations and the greater vulnerability of minorities and recent immigrants have not been fully acknowledged. Women and children who have to disclose violence to persons in authority from another culture face additional barriers and less sensitive and responsive services. Due to the silence on these issues few clinical and research insights exist, and almost no dialogue between minority communities and service providers is taking place. (p. 285)

Understanding the barriers and differences for women and children from other cultures is extremely important for shelter workers. The comments by Peled et al. were made in 1995, and the discussions with my respondents at the facilities in Southwestern Ontario and the GTA took place in 1997, which would suggest that not much improvement occurred in this two-year period.

Aruna Papp's 1995 ethnographic accounts of seven South Asian women and their children relate how cultural backgrounds create barriers for such people in Canada. Papp explains that many South Asian women never leave their violent environments because of indoctrination from early childhood:

We were made to understand, through our upbringing, that we were the wrong sex. In our families, we saw that only the sons had status. As girls, we were unworthy and unwanted. Because of the dowries that must be paid to find us suitable husbands, our families would lose their wealth while our husbands' families would increase theirs. In our fathers' concept of barter, we were poor trades.
Papp also describes how shame inhibits a South Asian woman's ability to leave home, even if she is being badly abused and beaten by her husband, his family, and her own sons. She relates how the parents of such women have taught their daughters that marriages fail only because they do not put their families first.

Papp says that when South Asian women leave their husbands they are considered "inadequate daughters" and "unacceptable wives," thus shaming the men in their families. The family's shame and its loss of reputation and status in the community "would make it hard for the other girls in the family to find good husbands and larger dowries would be required."

Papp herself was abused for more than 17 years. She immigrated to Canada from India with her husband as a teenage mother of two young children. In her ethnographic accounts, she tells about the years of beating and emotional abuse from her husband that she tolerated as a result of her ingrained beliefs and the shame that would be brought upon her family if she left. In the end, Papp states that it was her 16-year-old daughter who gave her permission to leave:

Hearing my husband's shouts, my daughter who was 16 at the time, came down stairs and began to scream at me, "Why do you keep coming back? Do you like the way he talks to you? You must like it, because you put up with it. Why can't you leave? Why can't you get away from him?"

That night Papp left and never looked back, feeling ashamed and disgusted with herself and wondering if her daughter felt the same way.

Papp's personal experience and the stories she relates about other South Asian women and their children who have experienced abuse illustrate some of the differences among women from other ethnic backgrounds. These differences are based on beliefs, customs, and genders. As Papp argues, male children are more highly valued and can increase a family's wealth. Female children, on the other hand, are thought to decrease the wealth of a family.
In order to assist women and children from diverse backgrounds, shelter workers need knowledge and training in cultural differences. However, it would appear, as pointed out by Peled et al. (1995), that workers do not receive such training or acquire such knowledge. This tendency is firmly suggested by the comments of one of my respondents:

Children who come into our shelter, who come from different cultures, have been exposed to two sets of beliefs and values. These children find it hard to adjust in a shelter. All our activities or programs are designed around children who are used to our own Western culture. Even something as simple as food can be a problem for these women and their children. I know there are a few shelters that specialize. For example, even our own Native Canadians have developed shelters for native women and their children who are being abused. These specialized shelters are few and far between and mainly in populated areas like Toronto. Because of these difficulties, we lose these women and children. They return to their homes and very seldom do we see them back. Because of differences in food and language and [the nature of] our programs, there is little we can do for these women and children. Also we do not have the trained staff or the diversity of staff to deal with these issues.

It would appear from the above respondent's comments that children from other cultures are practically ignored when it comes to family violence. Women and children, she says, do seek safety from abusive relationships, but then receive virtually no help because shelter workers are not trained or diversified enough to provide even basic dietary needs.

According to Papp, language is not the only barrier for women of different cultures who seek help to leave abusive situations. Often these women are unaware that wife abuse is a crime under Canadian law. Papp also points out that such women frequently do not know that the police are available to help them. Instead, they usually fear the police and believe that the government will have them deported if their situations are discovered. Papp says that even when violence against these women is quite severe and their husbands are taken to court, the wives, more often than not, deny that anything
happened. Simply put, they do not want to bring more shame to their families by putting their partners in prison.

Since shelter and hostel workers are often unable to converse with immigrant women and their children, the services they do provide, such as counselling, group activities, and advocacy, are effectively diminished. I was able to observe this firsthand at one shelter. A French-Canadian woman and her two children were not able to participate in the evening's activity. The purpose of the activity was to have mothers and their children interact with one another in a safe, violence-free environment. To participate the players had to speak and read English, but the French-Canadian mother and her two daughters could only speak and read French. The other residents, and the child-and-youth worker conducting the program, could not speak or read French, so the French-Canadian mother and her children had to leave the group and were unable to participate in the night's program.

Not only is language a problem in delivering services to women and children of different cultures, but misunderstandings related to a family's ethnic background can also play a factor. Papp highlights some of these difficulties, and two of my interview respondents also discussed such problems. Often, when faced with these added obstacles, women of different cultures return, with their children, to the violent homes they previously sought sanctuary from.

Since shelters and hostels operate somewhat like total institutions, as described by Goffman (1961), they have very little latitude to adapt their day-to-day activities to accommodate individual needs. Their goals and objectives are clearly based on Western societal beliefs and values. They have rigidly set rules, guidelines, preplanned meals, and activities, leaving little opportunity for children and women from non-Western backgrounds to participate in their current programs.
DISCUSSION

When I began my research, the intent was to allow the data to speak for itself. I hoped that any theories or themes would emerge and be grounded in the data. I started with an empirical statement that children who have experienced family violence are not adequately acknowledged and are given little or no voice in the programs established to deal with the issue. This statement came out of my own observations during 16 years of work with women and children who have sought protection and safety from the violence they have endured at the hands of their partners.

After two years of research, I was able to see that no one theory or theme can adequately explain why children who have experienced family violence are not being heard. Instead, there are numerous dimensions to the issue.

This research focused on children who use shelters or hostels, and on a small number of staff who work with them. Therefore, it cannot be generalized to all children who have experienced family violence. Also, the respondents were knowledgeable and experienced in the work they do with children as well as in the issue of family violence.

To further substantiate some of my findings, I conferred with two experts in the field of family violence. Together they have a combined professional experience of more than 12 years. One professional manages programs for children who witness family violence, while the other counsels abused women. Since neither of these women work in a hostel or shelter, I felt they could credit or discredit some of my findings and shed some light on the issues I uncovered in the course of my research.

I asked each of these experts to review the findings of my research and make comments. One professional was not able to completely review all the findings due to workload constraints, but was able to discuss with me verbally some of the issues I had developed from my data.
This particular expert works for a family centre similar to the one in Eastern Ontario where I conducted part of my study. When I asked her if she thought there was an erosion of services for children rather than an expansion, she stated, "Definitely!" She then explained that for four years her facility had offered 12-week group sessions for children who had experienced family violence. These sessions were similar to the ones offered by the Eastern Ontario family centre. However, in late 1998 and early 1999, with more funding cuts, the expert told me that her centre would be unable to continue with at least one and perhaps two 12-week sessions. She then said she was working with others in the community to lobby the provincial government for this much-needed program for children. She hoped that the new provincial budget in April 1999 would allow her facility to reestablish this service, which eventually happened.

I explained to her that several of my interview respondents felt that children's behaviour was directly related to what they witnessed in violent home environments, and that these respondents believed intervention was necessary if there was any hope to avoid perpetuating the cycle of violence in the children's own future relationships. She agreed with these comments and said that without intervention children "haven't got a hope in hell."

The family-centre professional then described two cases her facility had experienced. One case had been a success, the other had not. In the first example, a preteen female joined the centre's 12-week program after witnessing extreme acts of violence against her mother. Her father had abused her, as well. During the 12-week program, this child came to realize that what had happened between her parents was not her fault, nor was she to blame for the abuse she had suffered herself.

She came back to the family centre three years later as an adult teenager with a child of her own, seeking confirmation that her decision in refusing to be with the child's abusive father was okay. The young woman had also continued with her education so that she could provide for herself and her child.
The family-centre professional believed that without intervention this young woman might have become a victim of abuse herself and continued to perpetuate the cycle of violence. Although she had no proof that the centre's 12-week program had helped this young woman, or whether the girl's resolve was an innate quality of her personality, she firmly believed that intervention had definitely played a positive factor in the girl's life.

The other case the professional described concerned a young teenage male who had started the 12-week program but was withdrawn from it when his mother returned to her partner. The partner felt the teenager should not attend the sessions, insisting he did need such a program. The mother agreed and withdrew her son after four weeks. Two years later this young male became a father, and his girlfriend came to the centre because he was abusing her and their newborn baby. Again, the family-centre professional was uncertain whether the 12-week program would have reversed this young male's behaviour in his relationship, but she felt that preteens and young teenagers are at the "right age to make positive changes in their lifestyles."

I also discussed with this expert her opinion on services for children. I asked if she felt services were conducted by qualified and experienced workers and whether the programs were sufficient in shelters and hostels to make any significant changes for children who have witnessed family abuse. She responded:

There are never sufficient services for children. In my particular region, any services for children in general is underfunded per capita compared to other regions and counties in Ontario. The services and programs for child victims of family violence receive even less funding.

She explained that her facility's 12-week programs for child victims of family violence were funded by two government ministries: the Ministry of Community and Social Services (COMSOC) and the Ministry of Health (MOH). However, with MOH funding the centre is required to have staff with at least a graduate degree, preferably a master of social work (M.S.W.). She stated:
Our particular agency on the surface appears well funded by COMSOC and MOH. However, we are a community-based family health centre and are mandated to provide a whole range of health services and treat the family with a holistic approach that includes mind, body, and spirit. We are required to retain many professionals such as a family physician, two nurse practitioners, qualified counsellors with M.S.W. degrees, a psychologist, and highly paid administrative staff such as an executive director and other senior managers to manage each of our programs. All these staff are highly accredited and highly paid. When we received funding cuts from COMSOC at five percent and MOH at three percent, we were forced to cancel some of our programs, one of them being the 12-week sessions for children who have experienced or witnessed family violence. Children always seem to suffer, and yet I know from my experience in working with these children that positive changes can be made. I don't understand why our governments can't see this!

This professional then went on to explain that children using shelters and hostels are definitely not adequately acknowledged when it comes to family violence. She felt that part of this was due to the amount of time women and children stay in facilities. She said that she worked closely with child advocates who frequently referred children to her 12-week group sessions. These shelter and hostel workers advised her that mothers and their children often returned home after very short visits, and that even if they stayed their allowable six to eight weeks, the time was not sufficient to effect a complete turnaround in the behaviour of the children in question.

The family-centre professional knew that shelters and hostels often lack qualified staff or sufficient numbers of workers for these children, but as she stated, "This is a result of underfunding and decreased funding on the part of government." She went on to describe that at one time shelters in her area of Ontario had outreach or follow-up programs for children, but that these were cancelled when funding cuts began in 1995. She concluded our discussion by saying:

Our region is taking a very proactive approach with the provincial government in order to restore lost services and increase services for children who have experienced or witnessed family violence. We are working in partnerships with
many agencies who work with children to hopefully put children back on the political agenda.

My discussion with this professional helped validate findings from my research. She agreed with my other respondents that children do not receive sufficient or adequate services. For the most part, she felt this was due to inadequate funding, which prevents shelters and hostels from employing experienced and highly trained advocates to work with children. She also believed that intervention was needed to stop the cycle of violence: "We need to make society aware that children who experience family violence are at a higher risk to perpetuate this cycle with their own relationships later in life, and that if we want to stop this cycle, we need to change the behaviour of these child victims."

The other expert, a counsellor for abused women, did a complete review and made actual notes of my initial findings. Overall, she agreed with the results, but also made insightful comments about certain issues that were raised by my respondents.

My interview respondent at the Eastern Ontario family centre had talked about society being more accepting of males or young boys versus young girls acting out in a physical way. The expert counsellor commented:

I am hearing of more teenage and young adult women children of clients who believe mistakenly that they won't be victims like their mother because they'll fight back. Unfortunately, this escalates the violence, and also the police are charging women, too. Perhaps the media, which depicts women who are aggressive, provide role models for female children of abused women.

During the course of my research, my respondents and I discussed children who experience family violence and sexual abuse. As discussed by the interview respondents, and judging from my own work experience, these children seem to exhibit more extreme
behaviour than those who do not suffer sexual abuse. The counsellor who reviewed my findings felt that perhaps I was mixing two separate issues:

I wonder if including sexual abuse muddies the waters/confuses the issue. It is a trauma directly to the child. It often occurs in families where wife abuse occurs. No one notices the signals because of the constant turmoil in the family.

The above comments are reasonably accurate and perhaps I am "muddying the waters." Sexual abuse of a child is one issue, family violence another. However, from my experience and that of my respondents, we often see sexual abuse of children go hand in hand with family violence. This makes it difficult to separate the two issues completely, but it is important to state here, as the expert counsellor pointed out, that sexual abuse is a trauma directed at a child. Family violence, on the other hand, is also a trauma for the child and often obscures the presence of sexual abuse.

When sexual abuse or any other abuse is suspected or disclosed, shelter and hostel workers are required to contact child authorities. Any direct abuse of a child involves extensive investigation from child authorities. If the child authorities determine the child has been abused, intensive therapy from a range of professionals, such as psychologists, behavioural counsellors, sexual-assault specialists, doctors, and public-health officials, is implemented. At this point shelter and hostel workers pull back, feeling that the child has enough confusion going on and that any more "experts" in their lives would only be a hindrance.

This means that children who have witnessed family violence often do not have an opportunity to fully address what they have experienced, since direct abuse takes precedence. As such, the role of child-and-youth workers in shelters is greatly diminished and is usually relegated to offering support through group programs.

It is difficult now to determine if the suicidal behaviour of the young teenage girl described to me by two of my respondents was related to witnessing family violence, to
the fact that she had been sexually assaulted, or to both. In my own example of a 12-year-old girl at our hostel who had attempted suicide, our staff had only suspicions that sexual assault had occurred. The young girl never disclosed any sexual assault. Our hostel staff could only assume that sexual assault might have occurred based on her suicidal behaviour and her bouts of anger directed at her siblings, her mother, and other children in the hostel.

The witnessing of family violence and the experience of sexual assaults may cause children to resort to extreme measures, such as suicide attempts, to escape their pain. As suggested by one of my professional commentators, perhaps "the sexual assault combined with the witnessing of family violence pushed the kid over the edge. They need help badly then."

Martin (1996), in one of her ethnographic accounts of a 12-year-old girl named Stephanie, describes how this child eventually attempted suicide with pills after witnessing years of family violence. The expert who counsels abused women told me that while Martin's account may explain Stephanie's disrespecting anything or anyone at school and her having much older boyfriends, it is "accurate for some children, but not all." She further stated:

Some children change from being protective of their mothers and seeing their dads as abusive to escaping into their own worlds. They are afraid to identify with the victim. They don't want to be victims. The other model is to be the aggressor, and they try to escape through drugs/alcohol.

One of my respondents at a hostel described how intervention was not always available and yet she felt it was the step needed. The expert counsellor countered this argument with the following story, which suggests how intervention of the family can work in reverse:

I have seen in one of my families where Mom had Dad charged only because she was directed to by agencies involved. The three teenagers, one boy and two girls, suddenly began to defend their dad—and he had abused them, too. They would
take over and abuse Mom as Dad did, and she responded as she had in her marriage. She changed from being their mother, in charge of her children, to a passive victim. Those same words and actions used by her children that Dad had used made her comply. She could not see that if she spoke with authority they'd back down. In trying to assist this family, I've come up against waiting lists that are formidable or services that don't deal with kids because they aren't damaged enough—need to have a psychiatric diagnosis—or they're not able to meet the needs because the kids are too damaged, i.e., acting out. Our local youth centre tries hard, but are only able to see kids every other week. They [the youth centre] are good, but not enough. We need more services that can help (a) the whole family and (b) be there for kids and parents day and night, especially teenagers.

The intergenerational-cycle or learned-behaviour theory tends to paint all victims with the same brush. It was refreshing that two of my respondents did not agree entirely with this theory. They felt that perhaps generalizing it to all children was not objective. Both these respondents had dealt with children who had been traumatized but had been effectively helped to become productive adults.

These comments were especially stimulating to me. When I initially began this research, I believed that children who had witnessed family violence would grow up to become abusers or victims and repeat their parents' behaviour. The results of my research caused me to rethink my beliefs. While there may be some merit in aiding shelter and hostel workers such as myself to arrive at explanations for family violence, it is also important to remember that many other dimensions surround this complex issue.

The intergenerational-cycle or learned-behaviour model does not explain why some children who have witnessed family violence do not grow up to become perpetrators or victims. It also fails to clarify why individuals who have not come from homes where family violence exists suddenly find themselves in violent relationships. Believing and applying this theory as an explanation for the behaviour of all children can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Thus, those of us who work with women and children in shelters and hostels need to utilize a more individualistic approach in our work and not view all children as potential victims or abusers.
One of the experts who reviewed my findings agreed with this conjecture:

And some have resilience, are stronger and not easily beaten. They recover quicker. Perhaps they've had someone in their life who has offered a different role model, given them some self-confidence, an aunt/uncle or grandparent or a teacher, or they are born stronger.

However, this same expert then qualified her statement by saying:

It is possible to break out, but there is still an impact, i.e., poor self-esteem. I see this in all children of abused women. They have two models of being an adult—to be a victim or to be an abuser. They need to learn how to be assertive, to get their needs met without hurting others.

At one shelter the child-and-youth worker felt that lack of adequate funding stemmed from a society that undervalued children. The expert's response to this comment was:

Society also undervalues counselling and support services. They need to be educated as to the difference it makes in children's lives in terms of dollars if we don't intervene. [They need to know] the cost to society for crimes against persons and property, for correctional facilities or mental health and physical problems.

During one of my observations at a shelter, I had the sense that the two child-and-youth workers felt their work with children was undervalued, particularly since they were often called upon to "babysit." The expert responded to this by saying:

Although the undervaluing is true, it is better for the child to be cared for by someone who is qualified and will help. Often damaged women would trust another damaged woman she doesn't know to babysit because there was no option. She needed to go to a lawyer's or somewhere else or just needed a break. There isn't recognition that these women are very stressed and need help with their children. [Mike] Harris may think these women should help each other or rely on family, but everyone they know is damaged.
The undervaluing of children translates into a lack of funding, as one of my child-and-youth respondents pointed out. However, one of my experts felt it was perhaps due to lack of knowledge and education, and that if we do not invest the dollars needed to help child victims of family violence, the cost to society will greatly increase in the long term. The comments made by these workers highlighted a number of questions for me.

Are children undervalued and, if so, by whom? Is the lack of funding related to the poor knowledge and education surrounding the issue of family violence? Or is the dearth of funding connected to how society values children? For me, this is very much a chicken-and-egg debate. Which came first? When we undervalue the worth of something, it often carries a dollar-and-cents value.

Generally speaking, society realizes that its children are an important resource that will transmit its beliefs and values to future generations. Evidence of this is found in the billions spent on education and health care for our children. However, when children or their families do not fit the norm and are dysfunctional for one reason or another, society tends to turn a blind eye. I do not believe society consciously undervalues children. In fact, I think society would be prepared to assist these children and their families if its members were made more aware of the problem.

I did learn from my study that very little empirical research on family violence exists. However, without research on this issue we cannot demonstrate to society or our governments the need for adequate funding to deal with the problems faced by child victims of family violence. As a society, we are not prepared to put our dollars into something that does not carry a guarantee. When we purchase a tangible product and it does not work, we seek to get our money back. Longitudinal studies and increased awareness about (and education in) the effects of family violence on children are needed to demonstrate to society and governments the importance and value of each child. Only
then will society request its governments to put forward the money needed to make a real difference for these children.

In the past 20 years, more and more knowledge and awareness has been imparted by those working in the field of family violence. However, knowledge is only one facet in the issue. Another part of the problem that I encountered in this study, and in my own work experience, lies in the family's right to privacy and the belief that what goes on behind closed doors stays there. With beliefs such as these it is difficult for society to step in and intervene. I have often heard comments from individuals who know that domestic violence is occurring but say that it is really none of their business. In effect, they choose to ignore the violence and the impact it can have on children. As members of society, we need to open these closed doors and report to authorities any violence that exists within a family. Children who witness or experience family violence are at the very least being emotionally abused. Child abuse is reported to child authorities. Therefore, when we know of a case of domestic violence, whether it be in our own family or in a neighbour's, we should be required by law, as in cases of child abuse, to report it to the proper authorities.

From my own experience in the field, it appears that children's services are undervalued. When we experience government funding cuts to Violence Against Women programs, it is our children's programs that are slashed and eventually become nonexistent. Although we strive to get funding from other sources, it is extremely difficult to do so merely through increased awareness and heartrending stories. We really cannot offer possible donors documented proof that their assistance will achieve guaranteed results. Again, this is where research, particularly longitudinal studies, might provide potential donors and others more assurance that what they give will make a positive difference.

In my discussions concerning the provision of services for children in shelters and hostels, I explored the number of children versus women in a shelter or hostel and the
ratio of workers for women versus children in any given facility. I discovered two
differences. One was that workers were available 24 hours for women but only 10.8 hours
on average for children, while shelters and hostels only had an average of 2.3 child-and-
youth workers. Interview respondents further stated that approximately 68 percent of
their residents were children, while those who answered my questionnaire indicated a 59
percent average in any given month.

Since shelters and hostels operate on a 24-hour basis with anywhere between 59
percent to 68 percent of their residents being children, they only average 2.3 workers over
a 10.8-hour period. In most cases, as my findings indicate, these child-and-youth workers
do not work together and have little or no overlap in their shifts. Women or mothers in a
shelter or hostel, on the other hand, are provided with 24-hour service, and for safety
reasons have a minimum of two workers on each of the three shifts within a 24-hour
period. One of the experts who reviewed my findings found this alarming. She felt they
might set up a competition between counsellors for women and child advocates:

I don't think it's necessary to set them up in opposition. We don't have support
for the women and we can't afford to lose this. We need children's services in
addition to this! And perhaps more of the sort of program whereby the workers
go into the home and work with the mom and children. A competition is set up
between counsellors for women and child advocates that is not helpful. If all
workers were treated well, there would not be this resentment.

The counsellor who reviewed my findings suggested that a competition was set up
between women's caseworkers and children's advocates. While this may not be helpful
and can result in resentment between groups of workers in shelters and hostels, it
nonetheless does exist. Part of the problem is due to cuts in funding and unionization.

When shelters and hostels were initially started for abused women, they did not
take into account the effects of family violence on child witnesses. Originally, they only
employed caseworkers for women. Over time, it became apparent that children who
experienced violence also needed support. Eventually, in the late 1980s, shelters and hostels made their case and increased requests to COMSOC and Violence Against Women (VAW) funding programs for money to employ child advocates. In my facility, in the late 1980s, we asked for two child-and-youth workers and a part-time recreational therapist, and we received the funding for these three specialized workers. Other shelters and hostels in Ontario also received VAW funding and developed children's programming.

However, with the Ontario government's large deficits in the early 1990s, gradual decreases to VAW funding started. In our case, as a hostel, we lost all VAW funding in 1995. Shelters, on the other hand, retained VAW funding, but did experience severe cuts in their base funding. As a result, managers were faced with hard decisions. They knew it was important to provide services equally to women and children; however, funding cuts made it necessary to downsize and restructure.

Shelter and hostel managers have also been faced with unionization issues such as increased wages and benefit packages. In the early 1990s, many facilities unionized; in fact, two shelters and one hostel where I conducted interviews had unions. Therefore, when downsizing and restructuring occurred in the late 1990s, seniority prevailed. Unfortunately, child-and-youth workers often have the least seniority and are the first to be laid off.

For example, at the shelter in Southwestern Ontario, both child-and-youth workers felt they would be laid off due to their seniority status and recent funding decreases. At one shelter in the GTA, where there were two full-time and two part-time children's caseworkers, the child advocate I interviewed felt there would be cuts again to the children's programs and services. The year before, after budget cuts at their shelter, the children's outreach worker was laid off.

The necessity of shelters and hostels to survive and provide safety and security for women and children who are victims of violence takes precedence. As seen by my
study, the cost of funding cuts and unionization has been at the expense of children's programs and services.

During the course of my research, my intention was not to minimize the importance of support for women, but to determine whether children were receiving support that was at least equivalent in terms of services or programs. The family counsellor who reviewed my findings felt I should explore this topic further. She asked, "Do the mothers want this? Were they surveyed? They have the legal say whether they want their kids in programs and what kind. I'm not sure as to where the father's rights are when the kids are in shelters."

The family counsellor's comments pose even more questions that were not explored in this study. I am not sure what parental rights a father has regarding his children's participation in programs offered by shelters and hostels. This is a legal issue and another complexity of family violence. However, while a mother and her children are in a shelter, she either obtains interim custody or already has custody rights. It is my understanding that the custodial parent has the right to decide what his or her child can or cannot do. If the father has joint custody and access at a specific time, then I would assume he has the right to decide his child's activities during his custodial visits.

Whether mothers want the programs or services offered by shelters and hostels and whether they were surveyed on this question were issues that did not feature in this study. I do know from experience at our hostel that when programs or activities have been conducted by volunteers or student placements, mothers and their children anxiously look forward to these special events. Shelters and hostels also operate with a feminist approach, and empowerment of women is very important. Therefore, when activities or events are available, women have the right to decide if their children will take part in any services or programs offered.

Mothers were not surveyed in this study about what they wanted in the way of programs and services for their children. At our hostel we do regular program evaluations
and ask how we can improve our services. We also solicit other comments and suggestions. After we lost our child-and-youth workers, some of the most common queries we received from mothers concerned children's activities, child relief or babysitting, and the availability of staff who could work with children. Before we lost our child-and-youth workers, our children's programs received a high service rating, and the only improvements suggested by mothers had to do with more services and time spent with their children by child advocates.

Since I did not directly survey mothers at shelters and hostels, I cannot assume that my own experience at our hostel is similar to that in other facilities. I do know that family violence is extremely traumatic and causes a great deal of stress, pain, guilt, and confusion among women, leaving them with no energy to deal with their children's issues. Based on this knowledge, I would expect that, if surveyed, mothers would have expressed concerns similar to those received in our hostel.

A review of the findings from my own perspective of 16 years of experience working with women and children who have experienced family violence indicates that my initial assumptions are a reality for child victims in Ontario who must use shelters and hostels. I also learned from my respondents that a number of factors exist to explain why children are not acknowledged or heard in this issue.

Although I have only reported certain findings from this study that the data yielded from my questionnaires, interviews, observations, and a review of available literature, there still exists many other factors in this complex issue. My research has only shed some light on the few issues I reported in my findings.

However, I did learn during this long journey that a lot of work still needs to be done. I have been able to report on my original questions with some confidence, but I am now left with many unanswered questions. I left each observation and interview with ideas and notions that required further investigation. The two experts who reviewed my findings also raised concerns and issues.
My questionnaire was designed to assist me in locating suitable sites throughout Ontario to do my observations and interviews. I also developed the questionnaire to help me determine if my initial reason for doing this research was valid, or whether I was the only one who felt child victims of family violence were not properly acknowledged in this issue.

Not only did the questionnaire allow me to locate sites in Ontario to do the research, but it substantiated the observations I made in my workplace and verified my own feelings about the voicelessness of children who have experienced family violence. The questionnaire also did much more. Comments made by the 10 respondents in shelters and hostels across Ontario opened the door to other issues and concerns, and initiated several questions that guided a part of this research during the observation-and-interview sessions.

What emerged from the questionnaire were questions about provision of services. The responses encouraged me to explore the issues in more detail and prompted me to ask my interview respondents if the services for children in shelters and hostels are adequate and to determine just how they are delivered. In my conclusion, I will attempt to summarize my findings briefly and demonstrate how they offer some answers to the questions raised in my study.
CONCLUSION

... intervention with the child may, in essence, constitute the best form of primary prevention of adult domestic violence. (Carlson 1984, p. 160)

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. (a respondent's comment in an interview)

Our government spends billions of dollars each year to pay for emergency room care necessitated by acts of violence, to keep more than 1.2 million prisoners incarcerated, and to maintain a judiciary that cannot deal adequately with our crime rates. Although funds somehow are found for these post-violence expenses, programs that would serve to prevent violence are rejected or not even entertained because of the cost. (Miedzian 1995, pp. 22-23)

Children are not children, they're just younger people, and to ignore the state of children is to ignore the state of our world. (unknown source)

The above statements tie together the themes that flow through my research findings. Furthermore, they provide suggestions or recommendations that can help improve a society that now allows children to grow up in homes where they are consistently exposed to violence between their parents.

It is difficult to discuss one problem without linking it to other factors that exist within the issue of family violence. Although the points raised by the respondents in this study are all significant, they do not stand alone, but contribute to a broader picture.

In my discussion of the causes of family violence, I discovered there are three separate dimensions: historical, theoretical, and political and economical. In order to resolve the complex issue of family violence and its impact on child witnesses, it is necessary to understand the dynamics that exist within and between all of these dimensions.

For example, to provide adequate services and programs for children from diverse cultures and backgrounds, properly trained and knowledgeable child advocates are
required. The attainment of appropriate services and staff requires governments that are willing to invest resources in future generations of children, which means individuals in society have a responsibility to convince their governments of the pressing need for such an investment.

Historically, the family as an institution has been given the authority to rear future generations. However, this is not always possible in families where the parents have been damaged themselves. Children need to have appropriate role models, and their parents are expected by society to act as such in order to provide their children with acceptable behavioural patterns during socialization.

Certain theories predict that if people learn behaviour from parents who have been abusers and victims, then we, as a society, cannot expect the children of these potential parents to become good role models. However, these theories do not address the reality of children from such homes who grow up and do not become victims or abusers.

During my research, child advocates indicated how important it was to stop the intergenerational cycle of violence, and that the way to do this is with children. These respondents expressed the need to change children's learned behaviour and to let them know that expressing themselves with others in an aggressive or passive manner will only lead to their becoming aggressive abusers or passive victims.

Intervention appears to be a critical key to the puzzle of this issue. However, as Miedzian (1995) suggests, our governments all too often reject programs that might prevent violence, and yet pour billions of dollars into programs that address postviolence activities. Even shelters and hostels can be construed as expenses in response to postviolent acts. Still, it is important to note that $1.6 billion was spent on family violence by all police services in Canada in 1980, but MacLeod's study (1987) estimated that shelters and transitions houses only received approximately $40 million from Canadian governments in 1985.
A more recent study conducted in 1995 by the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children found that Canadian taxpayers paid $4 billion in direct and indirect costs as a result of violence against women and children. Although this study did not put a price tag on the cost of operating shelters, hostels, and other housing programs for abused women and children, it is highly unlikely that there has been a comparative increase in dollars to these services since MacLeod's study in 1987. In fact, my respondents all discussed decreases in their funding, necessitating the cutting of services and programs since 1995. Most of these fiscal reductions resulted in loss of programs for children and layoffs of child advocates so that services could be maintained for mothers.

Since intervention seems to be an important element in changing behaviour of children who have witnessed family violence, then sufficient and secure funding must be put in place for shelters and hostels. Secure funding would mean that facilities could hire staff who are experienced and qualified to work with this particular group of children. Unfortunately, this study found that experienced and qualified staff were not always hired by shelters and hostels. One respondent at a shelter stated that her facility used volunteers, students, or other shelter workers to provide programming for children. Other shelters reported that their staff had diverse and varied experience. Two respondents I interviewed were doing professional-development courses or on-the-job training and did not have specialized education before taking up their positions as child-and-youth workers.

In most of the shelters and hostels I surveyed or did interviews in, there were programs and services offered or designed to entertain children. These programs consisted mainly of crafts, games, other indoor or outdoor activities, and some group sessions. Very little one-on-one time was available for actual counselling for these children, and if they exhibited extreme behavioural problems, they were referred to outside help.

Referrals to outside specialized community programs such as family centres are not always possible. The Eastern Ontario family centre where I conducted an interview
had a waiting list of 60 children and could only handle 36 children a year in its 12-week group program. The counsellor at that family centre felt there had been a definite "erosion of services rather than an expansion" and also believed this was the case throughout Ontario. One of the experts I conferred with on my findings agreed with the counsellor's comments; in fact, she stated that two of her facility's 12-week group sessions had to be cancelled due to funding decreases.

Lack of sufficient staff and time for children was another problem that was identified in this study. In many of these shelters and hostels there is only one child advocate on duty per shift, but women have a much higher ratio of staff per resident. A child-and-youth worker at one shelter stated that her facility had two full-time and two part-time child-and-youth workers versus six full-time and nine part-time caseworkers for women, who made up only 32 to 41 percent of the residents.

The amount of time devoted to actual work with children was also a problem identified by my respondents. In the case of the hostel with only one worker, her 40-hour week was divided between children in four separate housing programs. This meant she was only able to work approximately nine hours per week in the hostel. Furthermore, two respondents working in a shelter had to divide their weeks between evenings and days, and they did not work together. In addition to providing one program per shift, they were required to prepare for and clean up after the programs, do any necessary record-keeping, answer telephones, facilitate referrals, and conduct presentations in schools.

Participants in my study felt that some of the problems that exist in shelters and hostels for children who have experienced family violence stem from how society undervalues its youth. One questionnaire respondent wrote that "children are not adequately acknowledged period (without even considering abuse), women are second-class citizens in this society, and their children are even lower . . . unfortunately, children are often 'forgotten.'" One of my interview respondents commented that the things she
liked least about her job were the politics, bureaucracy, and funding. She felt children's programming was undervalued and underfunded.

Shelters and hostels, because of funding requirements and accountability to their funders, have had to develop goals and objectives that are consistent with traditional government beliefs and values. To maintain their funding, shelters and hostels are required to keep records and statistics on their residents, not unlike those of other societal institutions such as hospitals and prisons. As a result, shelters and hostels have moved away from their original intent of being homes away from homes to become institutionalized facilities or "total institutions," as described by Goffman (1961). Although some women and their children can adjust to this different environment or subculture, many cannot and subsequently return to violent environments where at least they know what to expect.

Again, due to lack of funding, shelters and hostels are frequently unable to hire adequately trained staff to meet the needs of women and children who are not accustomed to Western beliefs or values. Furthermore, simple basics such as food and language are major problems for these women and children in shelters and hostels.

The issue of children who have witnessed family violence is multidimensional. Certainly, no one theme or theory can completely explain the phenomenon. Each theme discussed in this study intertwines and overlaps with the other and as such needs to be incorporated into a multidisciplinary approach by those doing research and/or working with children.

This study only investigated children who have used shelters or hostels. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all children. However, further study and research need to be done in this area so that, as a society, we can make this world a better place for children who have experienced family violence. *We need to listen to children and hear their voices, along with those who work with them, in order to make a positive transition from a violent to a nonviolent society.*
BIBLIOGRAPHY


The following survey is a requirement of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education for the completion of my master's thesis. Your assistance in answering this questionnaire will be most helpful. Please answer all the questions as truthfully and honestly as possible.

Place your completed questionnaire in the stamped self-addressed envelope provided and return it to me by MAY 31, 1997.

ALL QUESTIONNAIRES WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND CODED IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE LOCATION AND PRIVACY OF YOUR CLIENTS.

1. How many beds does your shelter/hostel have? _________

2. What are your hours of service? _________

3. What is the average length of stay per client? _________

4(a). Are all your beds designated for abused women?
   Yes _____ No _______

4(b). **If no,** what percentage of your beds are used by abused women? _____%

4(c). On any given month what is the average number of children using your facility?
   _______

4(d). What percentage of the children using your facility experience or come from homes where family violence exists? ________%

5(a). What are the qualifications and/or experience of your staff? Please describe.
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5(b). Do you have child-and-youth workers? Yes ___ No ___

**IF YES, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

   How many child-and-youth workers do you have? _________

   Do they cover 24-hour service? Yes ____ No ____
If No, how many hours do they cover? ________

6. Please briefly describe your admittance procedures for abused women and any admittance procedures for their children.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

7. Does your shelter/hostel provide children's programming? Yes ___ No ___

If Yes, please describe.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

8. Do you feel children are being adequately acknowledged in this issue? Yes ___ No ___

Please briefly explain your answer.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

9. From your experience as a service provider, please rank in order of importance from one to six what you think are the major causes of family violence. ONE being the major cause.

Substance abuse (alcohol and/or drugs) ____________________________
Stress at work ____________________________
Unemployment ____________________________
Childhood experience ____________________________
Partner desires to be dominant and in control ____________________________
Other, EXPLAIN ____________________________

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY.
### SCHEDULE 2—INTERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>AGENCY</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>SPECIAL FEATURES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STAFF</th>
<th>HOURS OF WORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1997</td>
<td>Carol F.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Child counsellor</td>
<td>Family Centre</td>
<td>Eastern Ontario</td>
<td>Children's groups of 12 children ages 6 to 12. Run children's and mothers' groups. Run same time.</td>
<td>3—1 for moms' group and 2 for children's group</td>
<td>1 hour/group 1 night/week no weekend coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1997</td>
<td>Penny S. Karen G.</td>
<td>F F</td>
<td>Child-and-youth workers</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>Southwestern Ontario</td>
<td>Service only abused women and their children. Provide some one-on-one counselling. Run groups, i.e., games, crafts, work with child authorities who facilitate groups.</td>
<td>2 full-time</td>
<td>7 days/week 1 works Tues. to Sat. and 1 works Sun. to Thurs. for a total of 35 hrs/week for each worker—weekend coverage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1998</td>
<td>Deb M.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Child caseworker</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>GTA (Greater Toronto Area)</td>
<td>Service only abused women and their children. Run groups, i.e., games, teenage groups, crafts—boys up to 17 years old.</td>
<td>2 full-time 2 part-time</td>
<td>Mon. to Fri. 7 hours/day each part-time used for excess numbers of children and for sick and vacations. Weekends covered if required on-call.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1998</td>
<td>Jean C.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Child-and-youth worker</td>
<td>Hostel</td>
<td>GTA</td>
<td>Service abused women and children and any other women and children in hostel setting. Some groups and one-on-one counselling.</td>
<td>1 full-time</td>
<td>Mon. to Fri. 7 hours/day. No weekends. Works in other housing programs. Has 1.5 hours/week to work with hostel children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Schedule 3—Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Children's Age and Gender</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Time</th>
<th>Number of Staff</th>
<th>Other Support</th>
<th>Activity Purpose</th>
<th>Role of Observer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1998 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>GTA</td>
<td>2 to 12 years boys and girls accompanied with their moms</td>
<td>Game</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 student placement 1 volunteer</td>
<td>To have fun with moms and children all involved without fear of violence socializing and working together for a common goal.</td>
<td>Complete Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1998 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>GTA</td>
<td>6 to 9 years boys only, no moms</td>
<td>Game</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 volunteer 1 observer</td>
<td>Fun for the children and freedom from fear of violence socializing and cooperating with others.</td>
<td>Participant as Observer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>