

# Lone Mothers and Sustainable Livelihoods: Taking Charge after IPV

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# Community University Partnership

- UNB Nursing Faculty in Moncton
- Crossroads for Women Inc./Second Stage Housing
- Headstart Inc.
- Support to Single Parents Inc.
- 20 lone mothers who have left Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Community Advisory Committee



# CBPR/PAR..



- Attempts to reduce power differences
- Collaboration and cooperative learning
- Involves cooperation and shared responsibility

# Photovoice Method of PAR



**Voicing Our Individual  
& Collective  
Experiences**

# Photovoice aims to..

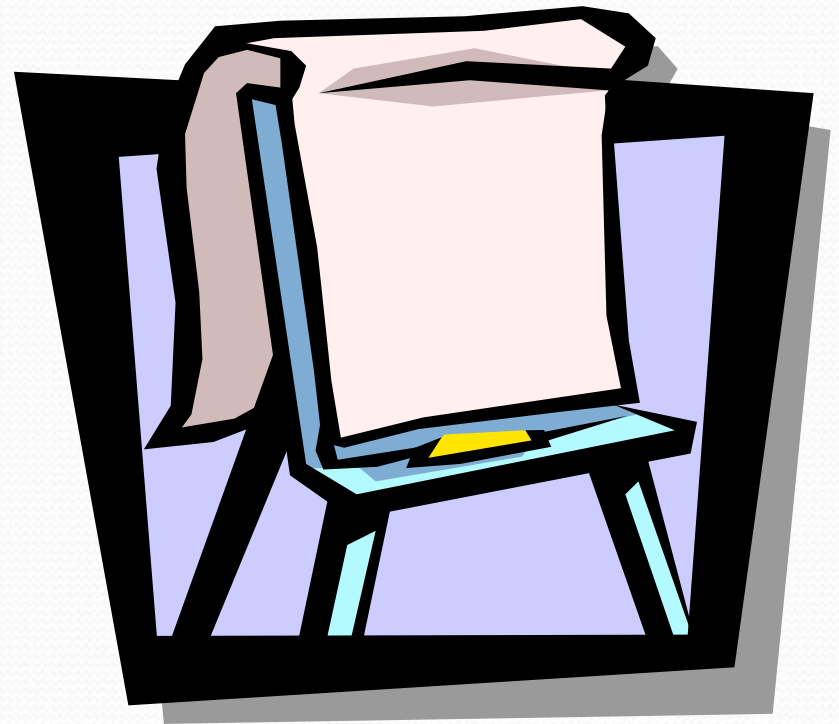
- Reach, inform, and organize people to enable discussion of priority concerns, problems, and solutions.
- Invite people to promote their own and their community's well-being.



# Photovoice process

Analysis involves

- **Selecting**—  
choosing the photos
- **Contextualizing**—  
stories of meaning
- **Codifying**—issues,  
themes, theories



# Analysis-Contextualizing

**S**—What do you **See** in this photo?

**H**—What is **Happening** here?

**O**—How does this relate to **Our** lives?

**W**—**Why** does this exist?

**e**—(how can we become **empowered** by our new understanding?)

**D**—What can we **Do** to address this issue?

## Photovoice...

“Enables people to define for themselves and others, including policy makers, what is worth remembering and what needs to be changed” Wang & Burris,





# Present Study

- Lone Mothers Achieving Employment in the Aftermath of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Funding: SSHRC for three years.
- Setting: Tri communities of Greater Moncton, NB: Cities of Moncton and



# Study Purposes:

1. To develop an in-depth understanding of lone mothers' transition to a sustainable livelihood using employment strategies in the aftermath of IPV
2. To provide a means for the lone mothers to participate in changing policies and programs designed to help lone mothers enter or re enter the workforce.

# The Sustainable Livelihoods Model—

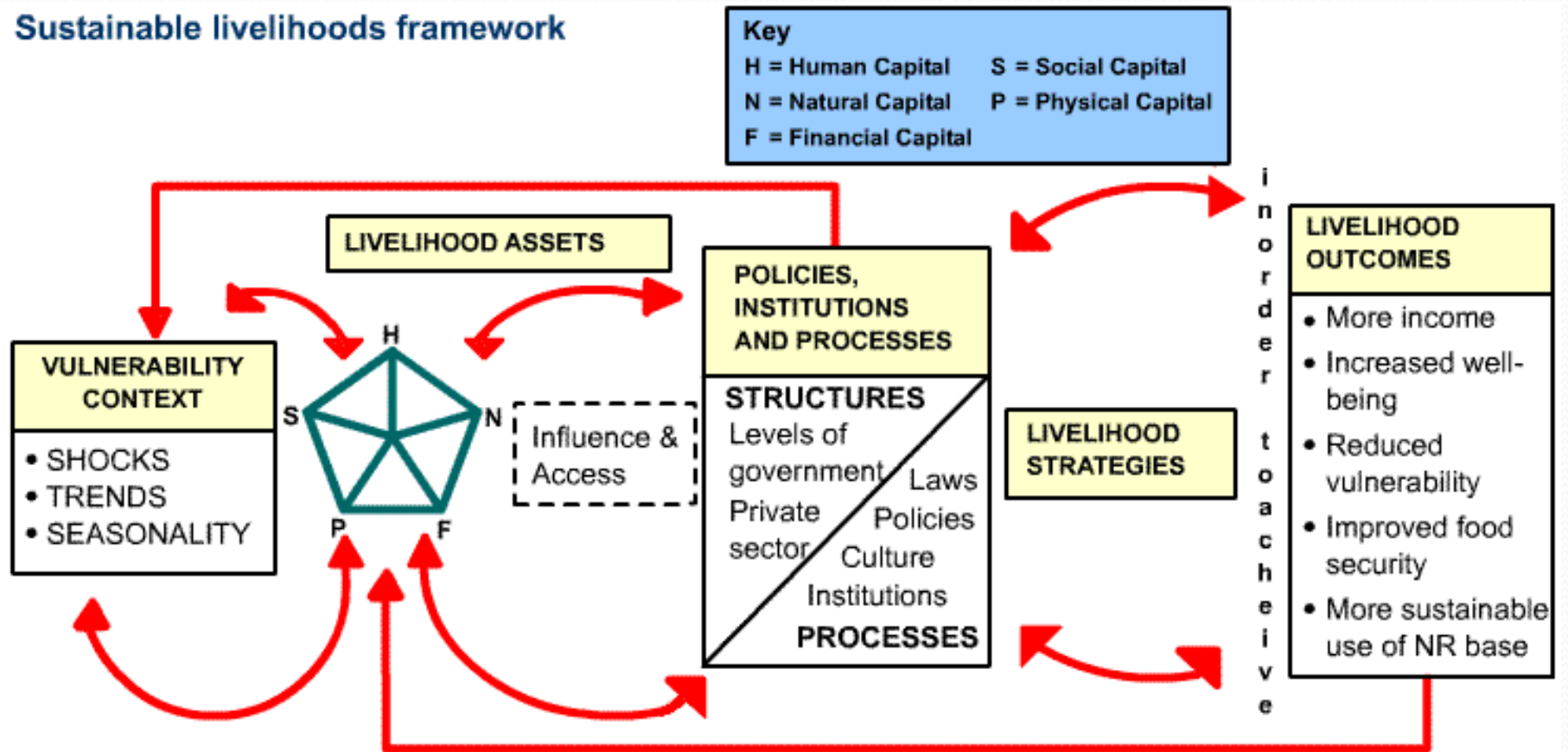
- Supports an upstream antipovertry approach to community economic development.
- A livelihood includes— capabilities, assets, and activities needed for a means of living.



# A livelihood is sustainable...

- ..when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, now and into the future.
- The model guides examination of factors that affect people's livelihoods, the relationships between them, and appropriate entry points for change.

## Sustainable livelihoods framework



## Livelihood Outcomes

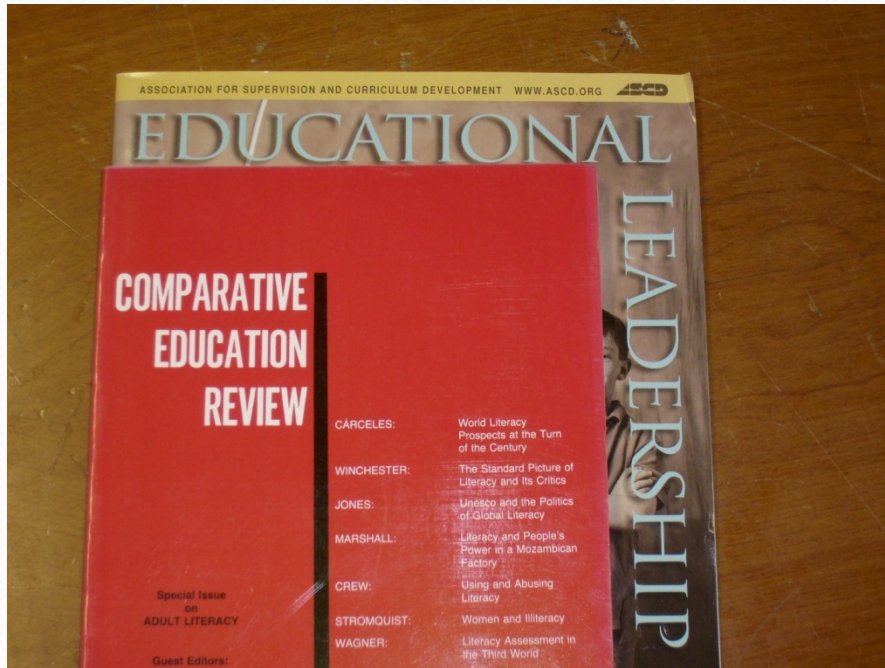
Aspirations with respect to present and future livelihood: e.g., higher income, increased health or well-being, food security, access to services, and/or reduced vulnerability



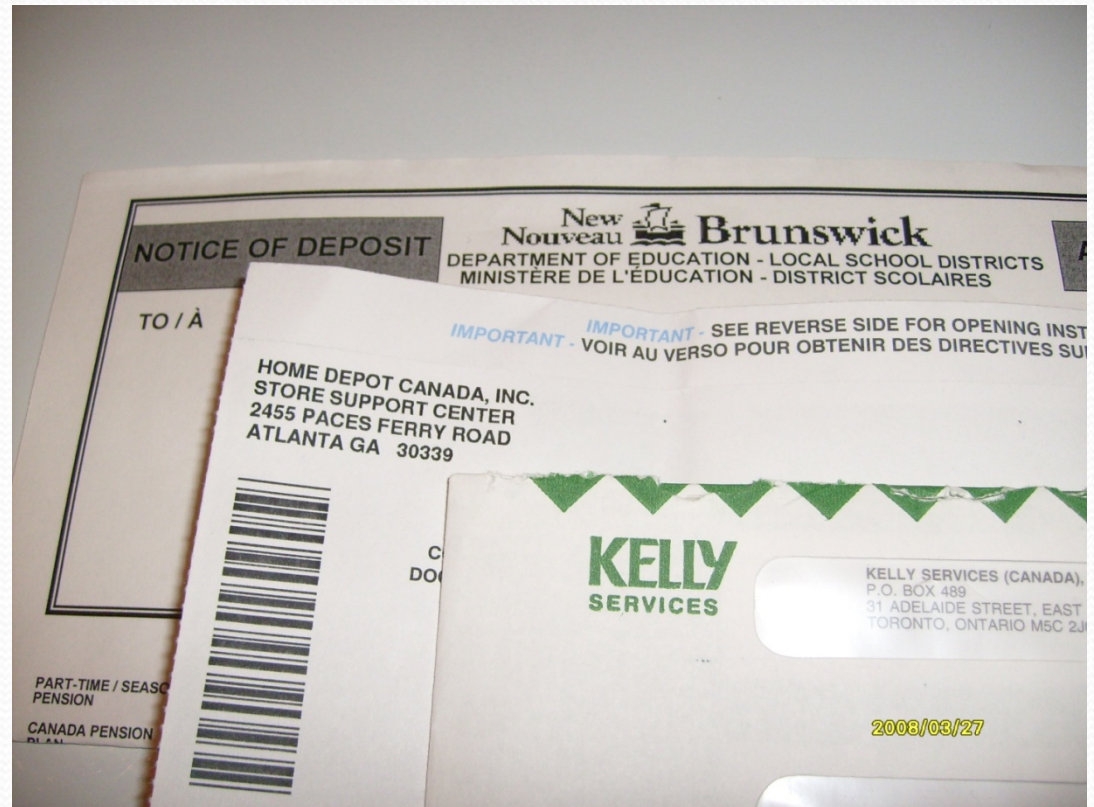








Above all, an adequate income to keep the bills paid and able to live beyond day to day survival.



Support  
Friendships  
Fun  
Spirituality  
Equality  
Help  
Others  
Dreams  
Mentor  
Travel  
Basic Needs  
Sharing  
Family  
Smile  
Freedom  
Good Health  
+ Positive Thinking  
Safe \*  
Job  
Peace  
Shelter  
Education  
Caring  
\$  
Safety  
Happiness  
Love



2007/12/04

# Vulnerability Context

Individuals  
and their  
contexts.

- Shocks
- Trends
- Seasonality



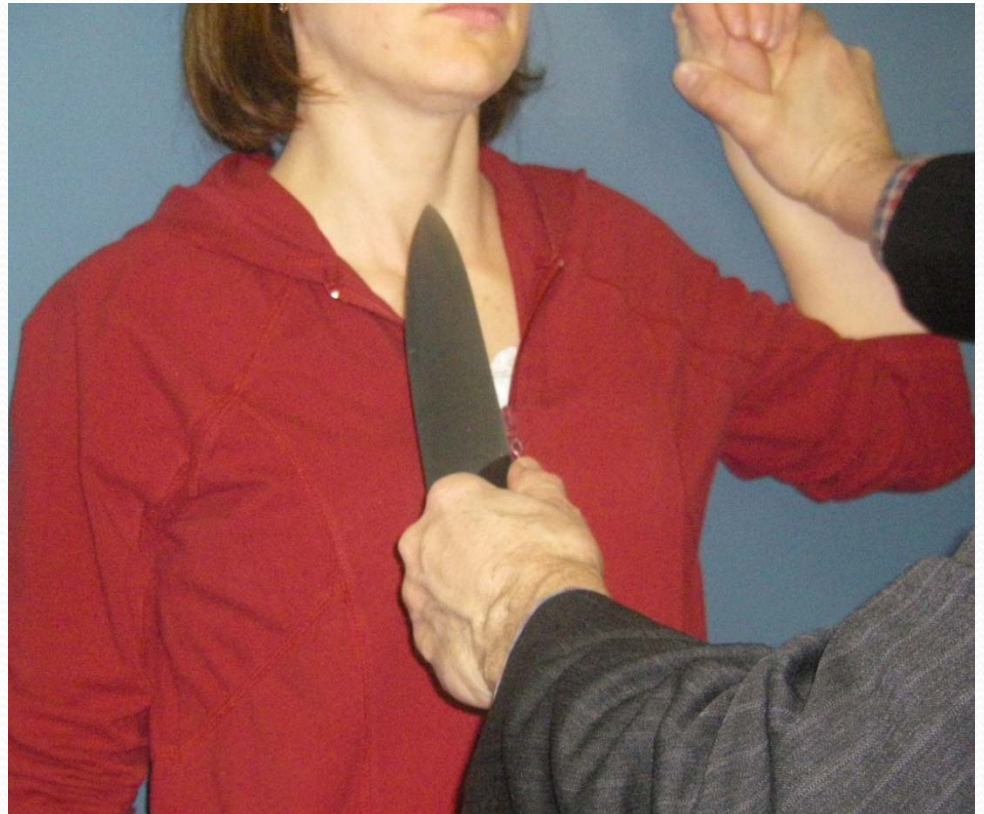
## Vulnerability from IPV ...

...begins with frequent, disturbing, and life altering shocks in the form of various abuses; physical, emotional, and/or sexual



Living with  
IPV is like  
“walking on  
eggshells all  
the time”









Even after leaving its  
not over....

Ongoing court  
battles for justice  
from violence,  
separation/  
divorce, support,  
child visitation  
and custody.



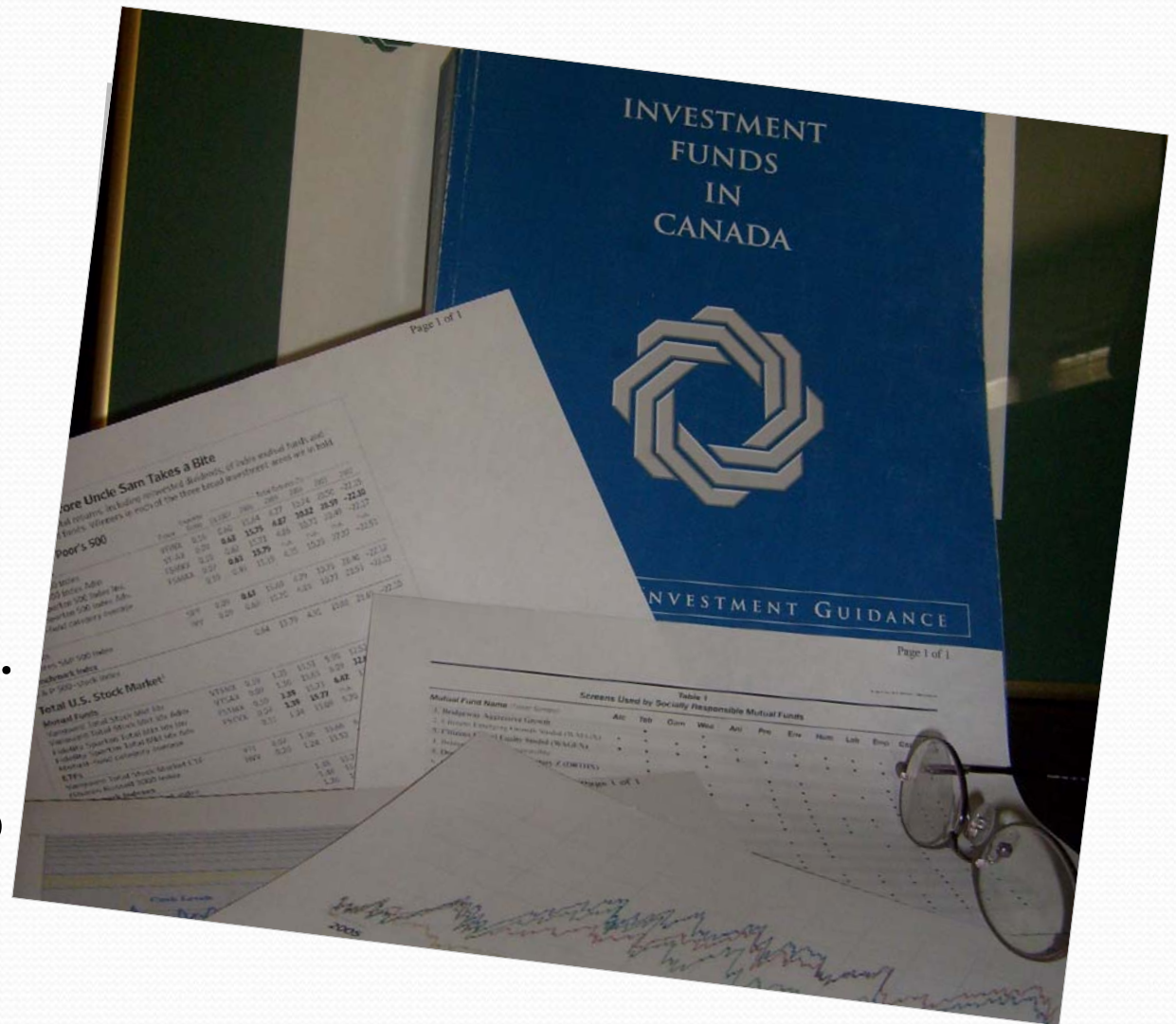
# Livelihood Assets

- Social
- Human
- Physical
- Financial
- *Natural*
- *Personal*



# Human Assets or Capital

Skills,  
knowledge,  
ability to work,  
and good health.  
Together these enable people to use different strategies to achieve livelihood outcomes.



So much time is spent in the health care system or in counselling for oneself or the children—it is hard to find and keep a job with so many appointments

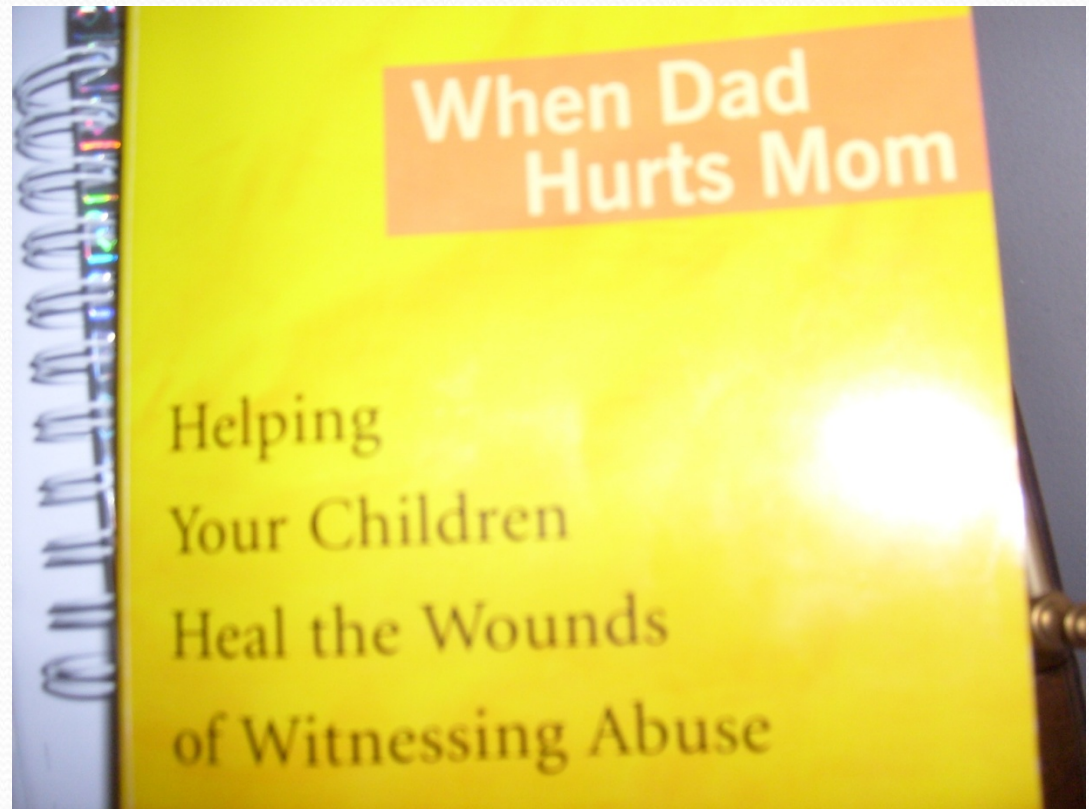


“I went to the drug store one day and the pharmacist said I was no longer on my husband’s drug plan..I had no other way to pay for the meds.”



**BLUE CROSS**

Very few of us think of the energy and time put into helping the children heal and then to adjust to being in a single headed household with less income.



# Social Assets or Capital

Networks and connections between people, and the rules, norms and sanctions associated with different institutions.



Important to find people and groups  
for a sense of community, of belonging.





# Faith Communities



- Some positive support, while other contacts resulted in further hurt, guilt, and denial.

# Legal Systems both supportive and harmful—not always equal for all



**Police**



**Court System**

# Physical Assets or Capital

Infrastructure-

- Transportation
- Housing
- Access to Information, etc.

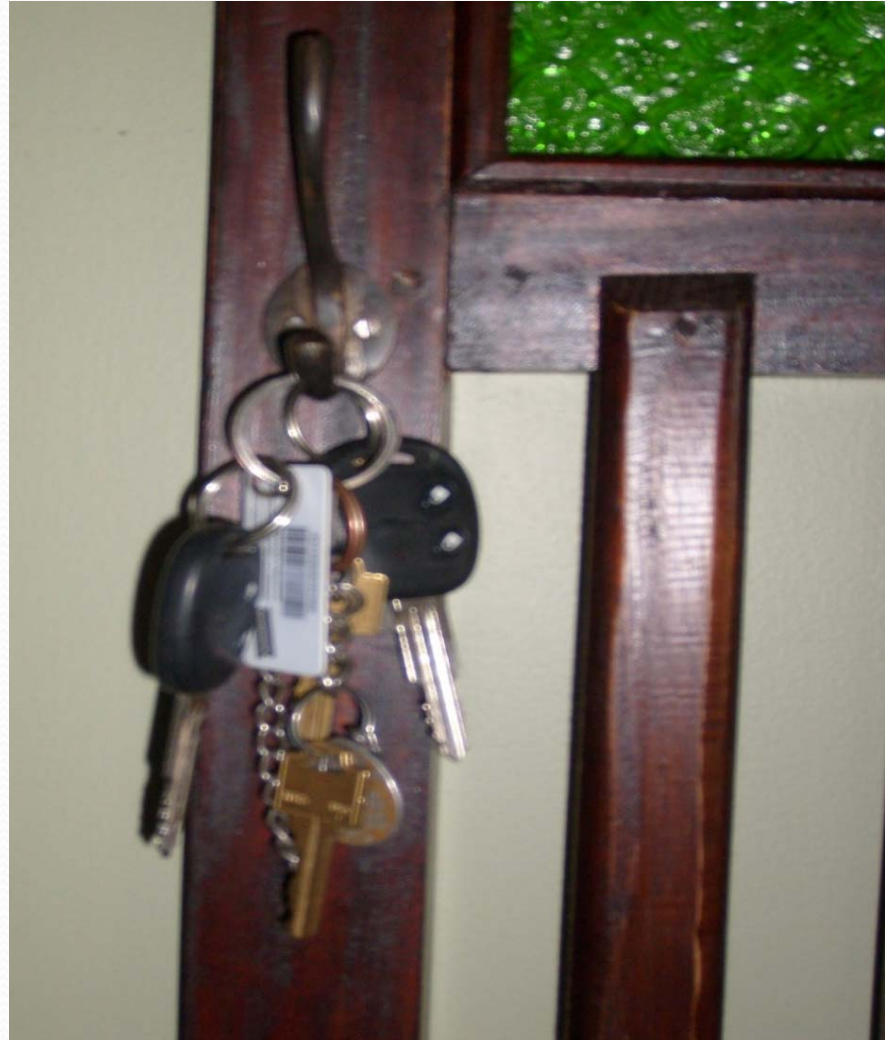


Public transport not always convenient due to schedules, routes, and costs.



“I’ve got a car but  
can’t afford to  
drive”

- Insurance,  
maintenance,  
registration,  
licence  
renewal,  
fluctuating gas  
prices...



Renting out rooms or apartments may be necessary for meeting mortgage payments..with hassles and a loss of privacy.



# Leaky Pipes = Mold = ?Health



# Financial Assets or Capital

- Savings
- Access to credit
- Earnings/  
Income
- Remittances.





Re-establishing Financial and Physical capital—necessary, but not always easy especially after bankruptcy.



Finding  
enough money  
for school  
lunches is a  
challenge





People say we just need to learn how to budget..we know how to budget.. What we need is more money to work with.

# Budget

## TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFUL BUDGETING

### HOUSING

- learn to do simple repairs
- do your own decorating and painting
- lower the temperature at night
- save newspapers, glass and tin cans for recycling
- plan meals to use minimum of food
- use lights only when necessary
- carry only replacement value insurance on your house
- conserve water
- make only emergency long distance calls
- stand up when talking long distance or use a timer
- write letters
- give up all unnecessary services on your telephone
- improvise furniture
- shop at garage sales
- use worn out towels to make wash cloths
- use glass instead of paper cups
- make your own cleaning supplies
- use washable dust and dish rags
- equip the house with storm windows and doors, if possible

# Our shopping centers...

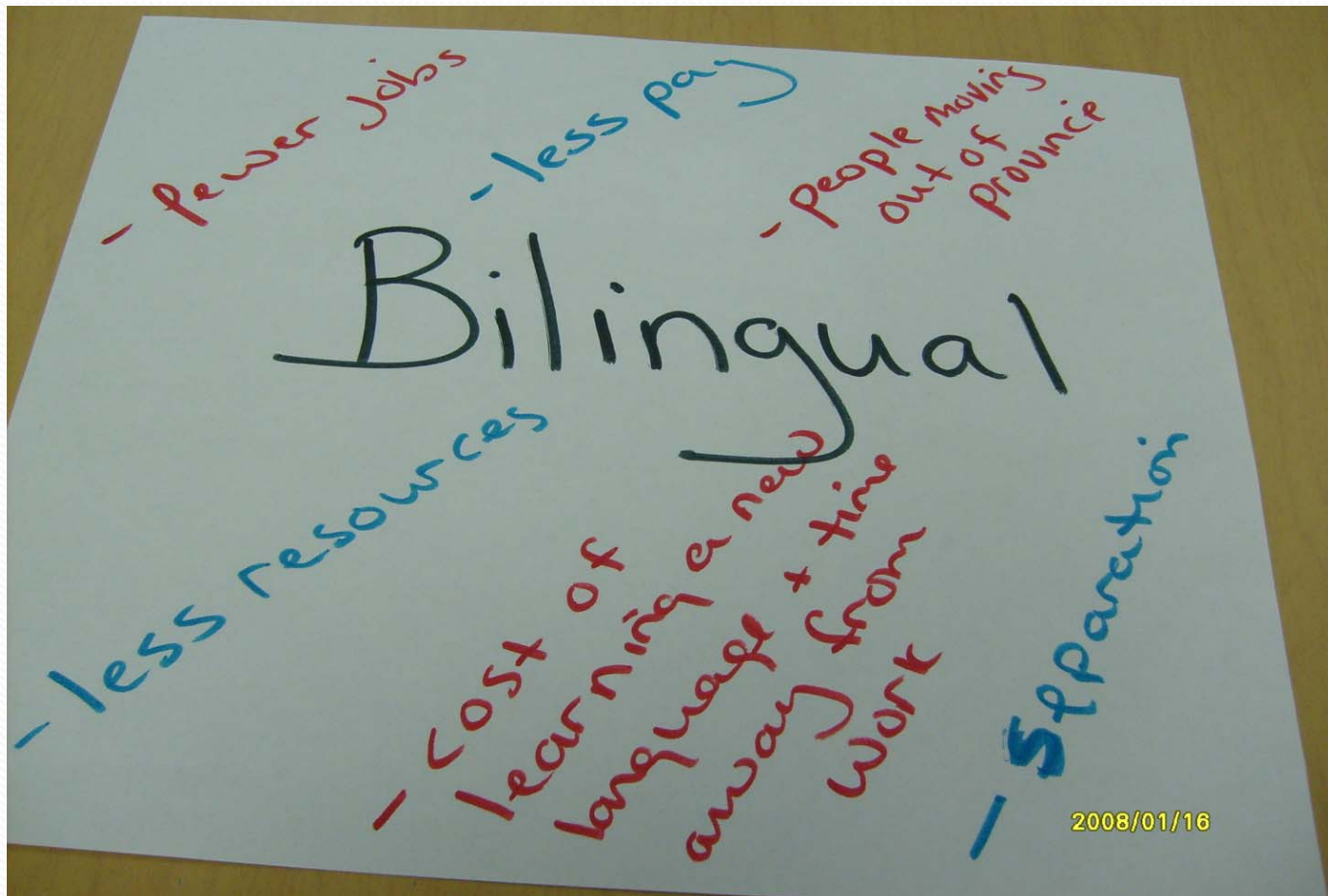


# Atlantic Lottery

“Everyone needs a retirement Plan—this is mine”.



Many of the mothers are Anglophone in a bilingual province.







# Healing amongst the Busyness



# Balancing Motherhood with Work and/or Study

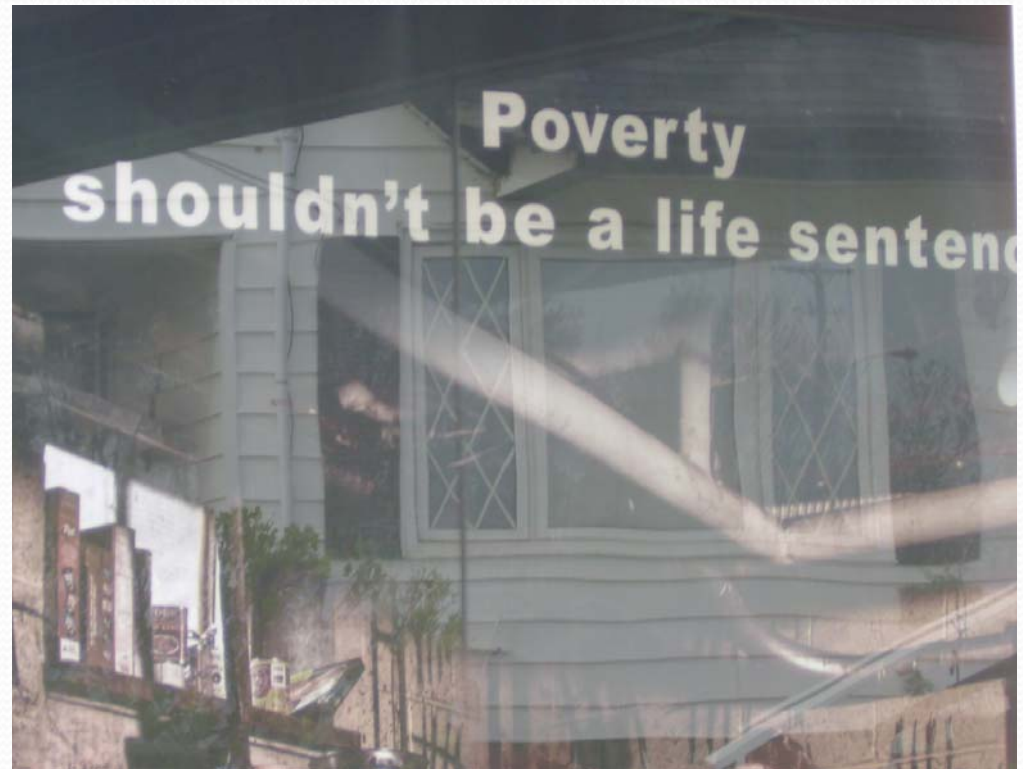


Feeling  
lonely,  
trapped,  
and  
hopeless



# Just leave they say, but...

- Leaving IPV is complex and often pushes a woman and her children into a life of poverty and ongoing harassment.



# Healing from IPV ...

...requires time, special supports, along with rediscovery and appreciation of oneself through education and positive experiences.



# Locked out....

- Often time and resources are not available for such a healing journey and the after effects (aftershocks) of IPV create even more barriers to achieving a sustainable Livelihood.

