

**REVIEW OF YUKON'S POLICE FORCE**

**COMMUNITY JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**  
**STAFF AND CLIENT ENGAGEMENT**

**AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2010**

## **PURPOSE**

In Yukon, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) provides policing services through the Territorial Police Services Agreement. In the past year, public confidence in the RCMP has been brought into question. For any police service to be effective, it must have the trust and cooperation of the citizens it serves.

In order to address the issues raised by Yukon citizens, a Review of Yukon's Police Force was launched by the Yukon Department of Justice, the RCMP and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN). The Review is co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Justice, the Commanding Officer for "M" Division and the CYFN Justice Manager. The desired outcome of the Review is to develop recommendations that:

- i) seek understanding and start the process that will foster positive relationships between the RCMP and citizens in order to increase public confidence in the police service, and
- ii) renew relationships for the RCMP and Yukon Government towards ensuring all Yukon citizens receive high quality police services.

To support the efforts of the Review of Yukon's Police Force, the Community Justice and Public Safety Division (CJPS) of the Department of Justice implemented an engagement strategy to solicit feedback from both Justice staff who have regular contact with the RCMP and Justice clients.

## **REVIEW OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY**

A working group was struck representing a cross-section of Community Justice and Public Safety Division with a mandate to create and implement an engagement strategy for Justice staff and clients.

Working group members included:

Clara Northcott – Deputy Superintendent Programming Whitehorse Correctional Centre  
Natalie Edelson – Acting Supervisor, Victim Services  
Sharon Hanley – Chief Coroner  
Kirsten Macdonald – Manager Planning and Special Projects  
Leah White – Manager Offender Supervision and Services  
Sandi Gleason – Manager Special Projects & Partnerships  
Jeff Ford – Director Public Safety and Investigations

During the first three weeks of June 2010, the working group employed the following mechanisms to implement the engagement strategy:

### ***Clients***

- Questionnaire stations in areas accessible to clients with postage paid envelopes pre-addressed privileged and confidential to the Assistant Deputy Minister's office.
- Focus groups led by independent facilitators.
- One-on-one meetings with staff on request of clients.

**\*15 Questionnaire were received from clients as of August 13, 2010.**

### ***Staff***

- Questionnaires circulated by email, mail and hard copy.
- Focus groups held during staff meetings.
- One-on-one meetings with staff at their request.

**\* 11 Questionnaires were received from staff as of August 13, 2010.**

The following table captures all engagement sessions held with staff and clients:

Engagement Groups	Action items	Session dates	Total number attended
<b>STAFF</b>			
Victim Services	Staff meeting focus group		8
Public Safety and Investigations & ADM's office	Staff meeting focus group	June 9	5
Whitehorse Correctional Centre	Questionnaires circulated to all staff	June	N/A
Offender Supervision Services	Questionnaires circulated to all staff at their request		N/A
Sheriff's/Court Clerks	Staff meeting focus group	June 10	12
<b>CLIENTS</b>			
Victim Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group scheduled. Questionnaire station and dissemination to communities.</li> </ul>	June 16	0
Community Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group with Aboriginal Courtworkers and Community Justice Coordinators. Questionnaires disseminated.</li> </ul>	June 7	6
Offender Supervision Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 x focus groups and questionnaire stations in Whitehorse and communities. Facilitated by Kevin Barr.</li> </ul>	June 8, 10, 21	4
Community Coroners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questionnaires disseminated to all.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
Whitehorse Correctional Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 x focus groups sessions with inmates. Facilitated by Bill Weber and Agnes Mills.*</li> </ul>	June 8, 10	12
Elder's Committee at WCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elder's session held with Advisory Committee members. Elder's holding own session to respond to questions.</li> </ul>	June 18	N/A

\* When asked, the female population at WCC did not wish to have a focus group session.

## THEMES DRAWN FROM THE FEEDBACK

### 1. CLIENT FEEDBACK

- **Community Involvement and Engagement** – feedback reflected a desire to have more RCMP community involvement and to create mechanisms for community input into police services.
- **RCMP – First Nation Relationship** – feedback included the need for officers to get to know and be oriented to First Nations communities and the need for an understanding and sensitivity to First Nations culture and the history of these communities.
- **Officer Conduct/service orientation** – concerns were expressed about excessive force used when persons were detained in custody. As well, concerns about racist attitudes, while harassment, prejudice and stereotyping of First Nations persons were also mentioned.
- **Standard setting** – the need for more experienced officers in the communities as opposed to “rookies” was raised along with suggestions for a longer mandatory posting timeframe.

### 2. JUSTICE STAFF FEEDBACK

- **Training** – Concerns were expressed about RCMP members training and orientation towards responding to vulnerable client groups, such as victims of sexualized violence and domestic violence, and the consistency of response to these particular situations. The need for more training in sexual assault and domestic violence was stressed so that officers are better oriented to vulnerable client groups.
- **RCMP capacity challenges** – Staff responses spoke of the concern of the RCMP being under-resourced and focused in on one client group (chronic inebriates) at the expense of general law enforcement. Concerns were raised about the amount of time spent in office at the expense of being present in the community. As well, questions were posed as to whether policing oriented responses were the most appropriate for some of the social challenges in the community.
- **Community Involvement, Response and Engagement** – Feedback reflected a desire to have more RCMP community involvement and to create mechanisms for community input into police services.

- **RCMP – First Nation Relationship** – Feedback spoke of the need for stronger sensitivity to First Nations history and culture.
- **RCMP public safety contribution** – Responses reflected a number of ways in which RCMP ensure public safety and how working relationships with Justice are positive.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS AND A SNAPSHOT OF FEEDBACK

#### CLIENT FEEDBACK

1. **What concerns do you have with the policing service you receive?**
  - I got arrested about a year, year and a half ago. The cop was rough in cells. Grabbed my hands behind my back. Shoved me into the wall. Grabbed me by the hand cuffs and lifted me up in the air by the cuffs over and over (should be all on video tape – left marks on wrists for 3 weeks). They call him (the police officer in this discussion) on the streets “superman cop”.
  - Don't have a nurse or someone qualified there to give medication if needed.
  - They don't listen.
  - They assume that you are intoxicated then you go to jail then you have to go to court, see lawyers, their time and money spent.
  - Language barriers.
  - No translators for the Elders from the different bands.
  - Become a target, stoppable, picked on.

- Assume First nation traditions such as smudge, sage, sweet grass, they think that the smells relate to drug use in appearance and smell.
- Humiliation.
- Racial discrimination and profiling.
- A form of genocide through neglect.
- Example: letting & seeing a native girl (young) going off with 4 white men assuming she is safe with them/ any race.
- There is a lot of stereotyping of First Nations People.
- The relationship between First Nations people and the RCMP is largely adversarial.
- RCMP constables posted to communities are new (rookies) and appear to not have any cultural awareness training (history, plight of First Nations Peoples).
- Excessive force during arrest occurs all too often.
- There is a lack of community involvement by police (attending community functions, being in the schools etc) so that community members can get to know their police force.
- The RCMP are unaware of some communities that are “wounded” (Watson Lake) and how to interact knowing that is a key factor within a community.
- The police seem to be more interested in traffic violations than anything else. They don’t address robbery with as much energy as they could.
- A lot of racial attitudes toward First Nations People during arrests.
- They should do their job and stop treating people with disrespect, and stop jumping to conclusions.

- The abuse of power and lying that goes on in their reports (resisting arrest when you are not).
- It sucks in Watson Lake. Cops here beat you up, and we need to be treated better. We need native cops or make our own group for native people.
- They are too rough and rude, even when you're not resisting arrest (cuffing way too tight). I was recently in the drunk tank, and threw up 3-5 times, and they are supposed to call the ambulance after 2-3 times. They did nothing.
- They are so prejudice to us all. Especially in Ross River.
- When called to Carcross it took police 45 minutes to arrive. Uncalled for harassment. It's like they look for violent people to push their buttons. I have been in jail for crimes I did commit and some I haven't. Police brutality has to stop in Whitehorse. Also, there have been too many people dying in police custody.
- It's a game in our court system. You're not going to find the truth. I don't have a problem with the police, just the court system.
- They aren't helping the innocent, they are protecting the criminals. They aren't stopping the vehicles they should. They only stop at random.
- When you're under the influence, they tend to hurt you and hope you won't remember.

## 2. How has the RCMP contributed to public safety in your community?

- Impaired driving Police have been successful in dealing with corruption that goes on in the Territory.
- There are less drugs.
- Safety programs:
  - bike



- drug awareness
- fire
- vehicle stops

- They take impaired driving and family disputes seriously, and they have native officers, which is very important as they have a better understanding of some situations.
- Not very good, not enough patrols.
- They spend too much time worrying about drinking and people that are out on conditions, rather than catching new offenders.
- They don't. If I was white, they would treat me better, but I'm not. How can they get away with rape? If it was us, they would kill or beat us.
- They get drunk drivers off the road, and keep drugs off the street.
- No trust.
- They're doing a good job in the community with road checks to keep drunk drivers off the road. The RCMP were trying to catch bootleggers as well.
- They haven't even done that!
- Very harshly.

### **3. What is the community's role in interacting with the police to improve public safety?**

- The community has a role to extend a hand to the RCMP.
- Afraid.

- Perhaps not being so negative. This is difficult sometimes, as the police have given people a hard time for nothing before. Northerners look at some things different, and that is hard to change.
- Nothing. The RCMP shouldn't need our help with their jobs.
- Leave us alone. Let us help ourselves.
- We try to work with them.
- In my community, just a couple years ago, my chief and counsel consult/work with the RCMP. They met with cops and shut down a store that sold alcohol for a year to stop kids from drinking. It's open now, but no off-sales. Not much you can do though if someone wants to drink.
- To be involved in reviews.
- Have more reviews every six (6) months.
- Group community involvement with review with RCMP.
- Start a community justice committee with Elders, RCMP, Judges.
- Have more involvement with Elders in the communities.
- Reintroduce a justice committee.
- Invite the RCMP to neighbourhood meetings.
- None.
- Make peace with the natives.

#### **4. What is the RCMP's role in interacting with the community to improve public safety?**

- Have the RCMP attend community boards and meetings.
- Invite Elders on ride along or concerned citizens.
- Have the RCMP invite the communities or neighbourhoods to voice concerns to build community involvement and interaction.
- RCMP should be more visible other than during their usual police functions (In stores, in restaurants, community functions).
- Interact more with community members.
- Get to know people and their communities.
- Build more trust.
- They should inform us more of their job description, and instead of only arresting people, they should try to build a relationship. Trust.
- Not pull tazers on people for nothing. I had a hockey stick, but I wasn't drunk or violent, and they still pulled tazers on me. It's not right; they can kill someone using two tazers on one person.
- RCMP should be more visible other than usual functions (in stores, in restaurants, community functions).
- Compassion to the First Nation Culture, especially since you're pretty ignorant. Leave our kids alone and keep white man law for the white man.
- Honesty, accountability, taking responsibility for their actions. Acknowledge impacts on victims.
- The RCMP should be at First Nation council meetings.

## 5. What changes would you recommend to improve the policing service in the Yukon?

- Have longer than 2 years posting for the RCMP.
- Don't send rookies to small towns thinking they are top notch officers. Some of the best officers I have encountered actually listen, respect, and are friendly to citizens. I know some good police officers and I hope they try to do something so we can all get along.
- Ongoing assessments of the training.
- Find out if there is racial discrimination with the police force.
- Work more cooperatively with the communities and the people.
- Have the RCMP take cultural awareness training.
- Have the RCMP learn more about the individual community that they are in.
- Learn about the history about the First Nations people and their struggles.
- Have better supervision of new officers.
- Keep RCMP Constables in each community longer than 2 years.
- Be less judgemental about First Nations.
- Treat people with respect and RCMP will be treated the same way.
- The RCMP could learn more about firearms and laws pertaining to them, as some officers that I have spoken to do not even understand the laws that we have to abide by, and they carry handguns.
- Get police that know what they are doing. Someone that's been on the job for a while.

- First Nations are a self governing people. Therefore we should have our own form of law enforcement with more understanding for our culture.
- Take away their tazers. Too many people have been killed, and then they make up lies and say it was caused by natural causes. It's like they don't care how they treat a person.
- Keep your bloody hands off my people. Start respecting all First Nations, drunk or sober. It's your job to serve and protect.
- RCMP needs to make sure they get the evidence right and have both sides of the story. Being told you can't change your statement and you're going to jail for 14 years is threatening. Not taking statements while you're drunk. Put as much energy into finding the truth as keeping me in here.
- Get more working cameras and get someone from the street to run them or someone honest.

#### **Additional Comments:**

- How involved is the Government with the police force?
- Have the hospital held accountable for releasing intoxicated people to the cells too soon also have someone in the cell area that can hand out medication if needed.
- Start using the hospital space that is available (new & used) for individuals with disabled people, mentally challenged, intoxicated, street people.
- Housing (safe-long term) low cost.
- Women's transition home for women coming from WCC and women living on the streets
- Request another review meeting.

- The RCMP should be subjected to a thorough mental evaluation before they are able to use any sort of weapons at their disposal, as these items are to be used only when necessary.
- It's time for a change.
- I don't like the RCMP, and probably never will. But I did notice the drunk tank workers listen to you more, treat you good, and take us more seriously. They never used to, until someone died.
- There's probably not much point going all into detail about this. I feel the majority of the police here have a "pack mentality", and they don't think twice before they forcefully take people down. Whether that person is homeless, jobless, drinking or doing drugs or maybe has a mental health issue, they can be brutalized and nobody will listen to them. It's been 2 years since I was attacked by the RCMP, and it still hurts daily. When they drive by, my blood runs cold. I'm afraid. I feel some of the "officers" are the criminals and should be taken off the streets. Thank you, I hope things change. All Northerners should feel safe.
- I've never seen so many RCMP go bad...and that are bad. Quit wasting taxpayer's money and start taking care of First Nations people and our land. Respect, respect, respect (Brother Raymond Silverfox and many of our people that you killed). Minister Marian Horne, Elaine Taylor, Bev Buckway – You all suck.
- I've been here for 4 years from BC because of where I lived I had dealings with the RCMP here for the first time at (address) there was a female attending officer who listened to everybody's side and they knew the offender had a mental health issue. It was professional. The second time I had to deal with the Whitehorse RCMP they were obviously buddies with the (name) who is an ex guard at WCC. After (name) called the RCMP to remove me from (address) where I was visiting, I was attacked by at least three officers. I have PTSD and the officers from before knew that but the officers jumped me, beat and injured me, then they allowed me to harm myself while I had a breakdown.
- There is a law - you RCMP should use it on yourselves to its fullest. Silverfox's death was a murder. Quit wasting everybody's time.
- When I was growing up, I didn't understand the law and I would plead guilty just to get it over with. My record is really long but I didn't understand what else I could do (that record stays for life). I was brought up in residential schools- authority figures hit, pulled hair, and strapped you. I've been abused by the cops, and I used to fight

with them. They would take me out on the highway, and 4 or 5 of them would beat me up and leave me out by Marsh Lake. Now I'm labelled as violent and I live with that over my head, That stays with you, I'm not violent anymore but in court I'm still labelled that way. I don't think I'm the only person labelled that way. I see that stuff happening with youth. RCMP doesn't understand our culture. We had our own way of policing. In our community, life itself was broken. It took a whole family unit to raise kids; aunts, uncles, grandparents (learn how to hunt and respect nature). People plead guilty. I didn't know I could fight it. It's different now, but things are still not properly explained. When you get to court, they have already decided what's going to happen; they give you false hope. I have employment out there, but I can't get bail because my court case is taking forever. There is justice for the rich people but not the poor.

- I don't have the money to fight my way out of this shithole. Every angle should be evaluated. What kind of justice system is this? Guilty until proven innocent. The RCMP is shipped into small communities to investigate. They just see that you have a record and they say you're guilty.
- All First Nation's should have a justice department,
- What about tazers? I was arrested once and was tazered about 7 times. Not all of them are like that, but some. You only have to tazer once.
- Asked to speak to elders, but you are not always there.
- Quit hurting us. I got a broken ankle from them, but no proof.

## **2. STAFF FEEDBACK**

- 1. What concerns do you have with the police service you receive?**
  - Not enough presence – too tied up with certain groups – not enough time for good public service, similar to EMS.
  - Poor use of police resources – babysitting acutely intoxicated.

- Information sharing.
- Exceptionalism. Senior Staff out of touch. Whitehorse has too many white shirts, micro managed.
- Accountability – waste of money on ceremony.
- Community RCMP are fantastic. Small communities, easier to get one-on-one.
- Officers spend too much time doing “office work”
- Staff are not sure how to address issues of problem members, at what point to they address this issue or is it just complaining because each style is different
- “Customer Services” is lacking.
- The social issues that are driving this inquiry appear to be on the rise. For whatever reason, the public seems to tolerate the very apparent social issues that are that are plaguing a small number of individuals. My feeling is that a more institutional approach needs to be taken to substance abuse and the onus of dealing with these social issues removed from the RCMP, to a more holistic government program. I am not an expert on substance abuse, but I feel I can with confidence suggest that the RCMP is not equipped to be a social service agency, nor should we expect them to be the “go to” agency, for those individuals who have no other place to go. Clearly we need another option for dealing with those who live on society’s margins.
- No one takes responsibility; society’s expectations are over blown.
- The RCMP’s disregard for the most basic human compassion toward those going through “trauma or lifelong, debilitating, repeat trauma”. When involved in altercations, there is serious minimization or outright dismissal of heightened emotion/irrational behaviour. Situations in which it is natural for a person to act a certain way, becomes a situation where police try to control biological impulses through brute force. These situations can be lessened through compassion and respect, but instead creates criminality where none is needed.
- Challenges associated with new members in the community who may be unfamiliar with cultural expectations and traditions of First Nation’s people.



- The lack of communication between departments (breaches, undertakings faxed promptly, available contact person), ongoing education for new officers on DVTO/CWC (proper conditions/undertakings, proper investigations), and many clients report aggressive behaviour, inadequate investigations, and follow-up support. Also, the jaded views in communities.
- Policing services, both rural Yukon and city of Whitehorse are understaffed. Lack of manpower leaves officers overwhelmed due to file load, which creates an environment where investigations are not followed through and a lack of desire to see offenders properly processed.
- The service I have received professionally as a coroner has been prompt and professional. The few times I have called, the RCMP has been helpful and responsive. My concerns are not with our level or style of policing, but rather the social conditions that exist in Whitehorse. There has been little or no responsibility for the number of individuals that come into contact with the police everyday. My feeling is that up until now, the RCMP has been used as a social service agency; the individuals that utilize their services most often should have been dealt with by another agency long before the RCMP arrive. I resent that first responders are being used to back stop failures or gaps in the social service sector. It is both costly and unfair to first responders.
- Calling dispatch, internally prioritize, they try to “talk you out of it”. Don’t fee calls are urgent, have a large area to cover for 4 members.
- Would like to see more police presence at community events like the fair. People were fighting, not one cop was there.
- Constant shift in membership; unfamiliarity with our (both Victim Services and Community Justice) services.
- Inconsistency re. processes and procedures around willingness to take statements/ information (Peace Bonds) non-familiarity with EIOs (Emergency Intervention Orders) or how to deal with breaches under the *Family Violence Prevention Act*.
- Challenges with new members in the community that don’t know the community and culture.

- Good response seems to be member-dependent i.e. Some individual members are exemplary; others rarely return calls etc.
- Lack of training/sensitivity in responding to sexual assault (SART training is a good start, but is not a consistent approach done by all members).
- *Is it true that a new RCMP member coming out of Depot only receives 6 hours of domestic violence training???*
- Concerns that domestic violence is under-trained at the Depot level, and then new recruits are sent North without any idea of what they are heading into.
- On the whole, there is a lack of understanding/compassion and training re. the dynamics of domestic/intimate partner violence- especially when the dynamic is pervasive and there are repeat incidents and/or the abuse exists with other co-occurring disorders (mental health/addictions). This can play out in different ways:
  - Lack of charging, or dual charges
  - Clients have reported that they have called RCMP and that there has been no response
  - Judgmental attitudes towards victims ‘they must like it’
  - At times, biases are evident from some members indicating racism, homophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment i.e. members of these groups treated differently by RCMP than if they were white middle class clients
  - Concern that members become desensitized, and therefore need tools/training to deal with this- ‘it’s as if you are suddenly told that you are a doctor and have to perform colo-rectal surgery’
- Police seem to be under-resourced in terms of what is being asked of them i.e. if one RCMP rep carries 6 different community-based files, such as restorative justice, crime prevention, Sexual Assault Response Team, etc- how effective can this be in terms of actually completing the work plan set out by each respective committee.
- Police need awareness of unique context of each community - not just in terms of ‘cultural sensitivity’ (however community also needs to extend and make them feel welcomed at community events)
- RCMP are vicariously traumatized by sexualized violence and domestic violence. This leads to members becoming toxic in the role.

- RCMP are under-resourced; one member can be responsible for many files; they are needed to be involved at the community level for working groups, committees, etc. but it is difficult for them to meet the needs because there is a lack of capacity.
- Under capacity, not enough members affects the RCMP's ability to be full partners to working groups, protocols, etc.
- Policies for policing are set at the federal level and can be inflexible to the realities of communities ie. community capacity and resources are under-developed to actually apply the organization's policies. This leaves a gap in expectation and reality of policing in Yukon communities.
- Administrative burdens of RCMP restrict the ability of the RCMP in each community to engage in MOU's, protocols, and can make the process of negotiating protocols for information sharing, etc. lengthy and challenging.
- Different attitudes to responding and acting on matters, depending on if the matters falls under federal or territorial jurisdiction. Territorial matters tend to have less importance.
- New RCMP members do the most damage to the trust built in the community by older members.
- Recently there has been a shift from RCMP involvement in the community (coaching sports, informal meetings with community etc.) to a more limited RCMP role in community and arrogant attitude.
- Community policing is predicated upon real tangible community involvement by the RCMP.
- The process of someone changing their 'reputation' benefits a great deal from interactions with RCMP outside of their 'official capacity' or professional role. Playing ball hockey for fun is an example of the kind of interaction that creates an opportunity for both RCMP members and people with a criminal past learn about one another in a non-adversarial environment.
- New RCMP members come out of depot with a lot of energy, but they don't understand that element of the community policing protocol, being part of the community, talking to people, de-escalating incidents, being available in general for the community.

- Proactive policing, such as stationing an officer at a 'flashpoint' in the community is respected by the community. The Dawson City practice of putting a member in 'The Pit' on weekends was acknowledged as creating a 'calming' effect on the environment.
- The unique nature of the Yukon compels people to perform many different jobs in the community all of the time. RCMP cannot take off the uniform when living in a small community, which is the same for many other community members. This is both an opportunity and liability for building legitimacy depending on how it is used by the RCMP.
- Community engagement outside of the professional capacity helps to make the RCMP become more than just RCMP in the eyes of the community, it assists in 'humanization' of the member breaking down barriers to deeper relationships.
- The negative aspects of the historic RCMP-First Nations relationship impacts current relationships.
- There is a perception that non-Indigenous people receive better policing services than First Nations, people with active criminal proceedings, 'hippies' or transient workers.
- When issues of inequitable policing services are raised there is a perception that the RCMP are dismissive of these complaints, creating more distrust and negative relationships.
- There is a perception that the RCMP uses too much violence, particularly during incidents with First Nations and vulnerable populations. Aside from personal experiences the large number of complaints received by Aboriginal Court Workers /Community Justice Workers confirms this is widely perceived in the community.
- When less-experienced RCMP members don't comply with orders from statements or commitments of higher ranking officers, it discredits the force.
- Community Justice Workers try to act at the interface with the RCMP, but the process of 'training' RCMP members continually (every few years due to placement schedule) discredits the process and 'wears down' Community Justice Workers.
- The destructive potential of bias in schools and by the RCMP against particular youth was noted.

- The power of RCMP discretion, particularly in choosing to lay charges, in the Yukon is substantial, it is a source of friction among populations that feel that discretion is used to deny them access to policing services (notably among people with criminal proceedings against them).
- The RCMP complaints process through Whitehorse is viewed as ineffective and unresponsive.
- Some communities deeply resent the idea that they are ‘training grounds’ for RCMP to learn skills and then leave. “...we don’t want to be guinea pigs, we want veteran officers instead of young ones who just want to get this process over and go off to the big city...”
- RCMP are not a “privileged group”, where membership has its’ privileges.
- The RCMP holds an authoritarian role in our community, and seems to think that treating citizens poorly enables them to continue to hold power. Their role is all about enforcement and obedience. Community members do not feel safe.

## 2. How has the RCMP contributed to public safety in your community?

- Through the provision of support to the Coroner’s office, and specifically on-call community coroners, in attending unexpected deaths in the community of Whitehorse.
- Active presence in the community, excellent proactive traffic control (check stops), and a large focus on decreasing drugs in the community.
- The contribution to public safety has decreased as fewer members are available. It has become reactionary, and training is almost non-existent for new members due to manpower which leads to lack of proactive policing (H.T.A., traffic services, etc.).
- I have on two occasions had to call the RCMP because of “out of control” parties. They responded immediately and made me feel much safer.
- I work with Youth at Risk. When called, RCMP always respond promptly and professionally. I see the RCMP everywhere. They’re presence is obvious and they are obviously working.

- The people of the Detachment provide help in the process of investigating the circumstances of a death. They work to help me in my work.
- The RCMP is a visible part of my community. They have been instrumental to my work, professionally as a Coroner and have made my job both easier and safer. In all of my investigations, the constables I have dealt with, have been professional and have gone beyond the call of duty to assist me in my work. The only time I had to call to use their services as a citizen (witnessing a drunken fight near my child's soccer game between a group of men), the RCMP were prompt, and were eager to find the individuals responsible.
- Drug enforcement.
- Extra-curricular activities with community members when off duty.
- Street Crime Reduction Team made the downtown are safer.
- More presence last year of members on the street.
- C.O.P.S. ~ eyes & ears of society, seems to be working not area specific, is all over town.
- If people take the time to call they should show up.
- Seems safer to walk downtown.
- Senior members are long term residents of the community, members should have the choice to stay.
- High quality criminal investigations.
- In some cases, there is a protocol in place between the RCMP and a First Nation, allowing for partnership and sharing information more freely
- Recruitment efforts to hire First Nation members.

- Involved with programming such as healthy dating, drunk driving prevention, etc.
- Presence at community/public events in some communities, e.g. involved in school events in one community.
- Presence at youth events/ trade show.
- First Nation Liaison Officer.
- Police depot in Kwanlin Dun village.

### **3. What is the community's role in interacting with the police to improve public safety?**

- Community members should feel comfortable talking to police about their concerns, but they don't. If I was to witness a pseudo-minor crime, I would not call the police due to their rudeness and their accusatory disposition.
- Should be a proactive and supportive role. Taking individual and community-based responsibility to crime prevention through watch programs, information sessions on home security, information/education on dating violence, drug use, etc.
- The community needs to assist in reporting crimes, providing/cooperating with statements, and making efforts to assist in educating people on crime, Justice System process, etc.
- Neighbourhood Watch and Citizens on Patrol.
- People of this city are hesitant to report what they see because they are afraid of retaliation from the public. This has to stop. We need more parental control as well. Let's start helping the police.
- Being forthcoming with information and assisting RCMP in crime prevention and after a crime has been committed. Also, mutual respect; something community people often lack.
- First, the community needs to understand the mandate of their work and the responsibility of the RCMP in order to co-operate with them.

- Public responsibility to call to report.
- Attitude change when transferred to the smaller communities.
- Small community if they don't know everyone, everyone knows the new members. Community needs good mentoring of young officers, great way to get involved.
- To report crimes; to respond to public appeals for assistance.
- As community workers, to remain professional in bringing emerging issues to police attention via appropriate channels.
- One community had an RCMP/Community expectation protocol put in place, there was a signing ceremony, this protocol establishes specific priorities.
- To have compassion and recognize RCMP as front-line workers.
- Support and participate in meetings that bring RCMP and community together.
- To inform RCMP on issues of concern in community, and not expect that new members will immediately be aware of these issues.
- To be the eyes and ears of the community to the RCMP.
- Being pro-active to issues of community safety.
- To remember that RCMP are human and can also make mistakes.
- Information sharing about a new RCMP member to the community – information sharing and cultural sensitivity goes two ways. It should come from the community to the RCMP about the cultural of the community, but the community should also be welcoming information sharing about an RCMP members' culture as well.



- Include/invite RCMP to play a role in community events - sharing in culture.
- Communication and collaborate with RCMP – be proactive and not only reactive. Take a role in the safety of your own community.
- Community has a role to welcome and include new RCMP members, so that the members can feel like they belong as well. This can be through invitations to community gatherings, etc.

#### **4. What is the RCMP's role in interacting with the community to improve public safety?**

- The RCMP has a role to model respectful, professional, and collaborative interactions and to always serve and protect.
- Interacting in the community for positive events (BBQ's, parades, social gatherings), not only crime prevention, more education in schools and public, taking time to understand the different cultures/challenges the Yukon faces, and a quick response time.
- An active Recruiting Officer in Whitehorse no longer exists, and School Liaison Officer.
- They do check-stops at various times, speak at schools, and teach bicycle safety to children.
- To understand the needs of relatives and friends of a deceased person in finding out relevant information. Helping to inform people of the process of investigation, and the inquiries that follow when an autopsy is to be performed. To protect public safety and information dissemination. And also to provide a cushion for people to learn what has to be done to provide accurate information and help in a sudden death.
- I expect the police and those in their employ to be tolerant and to deal with everyone fairly and without prejudice. I expect the police to have the balance of being open and approachable while at the same time, have the resolve to apply the law in the best interests of society.
- More visible at positive events.

- They need to be part of the community rather than solo.
  - Create a mechanism for interaction with the community.
  - Open house style events,
  - Bike Rodeo style events.
  - “M” Division newsletter with staffing changes & updates.
  - More resources for community liaison and a dedicated member.
  - Meet the community where they are at. Don’t assume all northern or even all Yukon communities are the same.
  - RCMP ‘walk the walk’ in terms of taking a leadership role in exploring alternatives to criminal justice system- although the RCMP is a national structure, work where possible to be more flexible.
  - Ensure familiarity with Yukon legislation such as the Family Violence Prevention Act.
  - Leading by example.
  - Considering all alternatives available such as community justice that are located within the community.
  - Getting involved in community enhancement activities.
  - Being more proactive in their role, engaging communities, making an effort to get to know the community; don’t hide in your home after shift – get out there and be part of the community.
- 5. What changes would you recommend to improve the policing service in Yukon?**
- Strengthen local and regional RCMP oversight mechanisms.

- Implement independent investigations of complaints against RCMP.
- Improve response times in Watson Lake.
- Improve system of dispatch which is located in Whitehorse, and which creates unacceptable delays in the communities, particularly for victims of domestic violence.
- Improve RCMP complaints process to be more responsive and localized.
- RCMP awareness that although complaints, investigations and other matters that might seem 'trivial' or 'low priority,' they impact the lives of the people involved.
- New members must take the time to learn about the community, particularly regarding Community Justice Programs and protocols.
- Senior officers who have a good rapport with the community should introduce and mentor new RCMP members to the community, and to effective community policing.
- Many of the cited concerns can be attributed to under-resourcing, there are simply not enough RCMP to fulfill the goals maintaining public safety and doing the community-based crime prevention activities- therefore things get missed.
- More training on domestic/intimate partner violence, sexualized assault, trauma-informed approaches to working with victims.
- Culture camp (similar to social worker training).
- Training and support re. compassion fatigue/vicarious trauma- RCMP generally has a workplace climate of 'if you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen'- towards how this work impacts members on a personal level.
- More 'bridging' when members leave and new members come in to the communities.
- Walk the Walk – clear leadership and encouragement for RCMP members to consider and support the use of community justice and alternatives to formal justice system.

- Efforts to reduce the feelings/perceptions of segregation of RCMP from the larger community.
- More community involvement, i.e. “getting out of the cruiser” more members ‘hanging out’ at community events.
- Do not have workers respond alone to call-outs.
- Someone on every watch that specializes in domestic violence.
- Have the Community Liaison Officer available to answer queries re. status of police matters (rather than having to wait for the originating officer to be on shift to respond to queries).
- Explore possibility of implementing K-file type system in Yukon; have a specialized domestic/intimate partner violence investigation team that generally has at least one member on shift at all times.
- Clear leadership; strong non-negotiable standards for behaviour.
- Policies regarding RCMP priorities and community expectations in every Yukon community.
- Recognizing the benefit of RCMP being involved in the community through volunteering/engaging communities.
- Encourage citizens to file complaints about rude and unprofessional RCMP members, and make officers accountable for their actions. Also adding more female and Aboriginal officers and placing them in positions with more power and decision making. RCMP officers should also be more educated.
- Addressing, serving, assisting, acknowledging, treating and preventing chronic substance abuse.
- More communication with partners involved (Family and Victim Services, probation, community), positive police presence, and an ongoing education for both community and police.
- Increase manpower (Active Recruiting Officer).
- Try to get rid of the “us and them”. Safe communities is a team effort. The community is equally responsible.

- I think the system is good.
- First off, a facility to handle those people who have substance abuse problems, to be built and properly staffed. The Salvation Army, while good intended, is way beyond. Second, my question whether the RCMP is understaffed in the Yukon. Recent events show that some members are obviously over worked and as a result, are becoming desensitized to their clients. It is a tough job, enhanced more so by the challenges of a northern environment. Perhaps there needs to be an increase in staffing to the Yukon.
- Would like to see more blue shirts and less white shirts.
- More community presence.
- Change culture from enforcement to part of community.
- How are they addressing our complaints internally?
- Flood of press releases, don't speak to cultural change. More communication, let us know what changes are being made.
- Front counter accessibility, have to stand in line and listen to everyone else's complaints. There is no confidentiality and need more space.
- Encourage members to stay in communities if they are happy with the posting and fit in well
- Police oversight – improve police complaint commission.
- Need mechanism for police engagement.
- Better communication between justice & police.

### **Additional Comments:**

- The individuals, who are at the M Division front desk, are well known as being dismissive and rude. If the RCMP wants to clean up their image, they should try including sensitivity training to all staff.
- All the RCMP I have had contact with as a Coroner were very professional, and outstanding in the delivery of their services. They're a collaborative entity in the investigation process.
- The RCMP provides a very important service to the Yukon, and there are many very effective, efficient, and caring officers. However, when it comes to the clients we work with, it is important to remain unbiased and treat everyone as human beings. Because of the quick turnover rate in the Yukon, ensuring proper education and training is given to new recruits would help the transition.
- I've recently moved to the Yukon, and because of my work I see the RCMP periodically. I've been really impressed! Police presence is so obvious and I've always been treated respectfully and so have the youth I work with.
- The public concern for dealing with drunk and disorderly people needs special attention in the Yukon. Alcoholism and its relationship to poverty needs special care as well. One part is to look at what the police do in relation to retention of people in custody. Another is Emergency Department treatment through the hospital and its impact on the professional services that are available to the general public. I think that a special clinic for special treatment of people under the weather should be set up so that people from user groups really know what professional people have to deal with on a constant basis.
- The RCMP has a tough job to do; all of my dealings have been very positive and professional. Usually, the clients I see are marginalized individuals who have lived tough lives. I can say unequivocally that the constables I have dealt with have all gone beyond their duty to provide a high quality service to the deceased and their family that has included compassion and dignity. I believe the issues that are facing the RCMP, are larger than just the police service, and require more than just a police response.