

**RETROSPECTIVE FILE AUDITS IN
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES:
THE SPECIAL CASE OF
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

BY

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**A PRACTICUM REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE
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A practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I've noticed in a number of the Practicum reports that students make reference to "journeys". I now understand that in fact, a Practicum is a journey, and the writing of the report is documentation of both an academic undertaking and a personal struggle to achieve a goal. There are many people who have supported me over the past two years in completing this Practicum and report. I would like to especially thank Dennis Schellenberg, Executive Director of Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba, for sitting on the Practicum committee and for his support and optimism throughout. As well at the Agency, I would like to thank Diane deLucia, North Urban Supervisor, for uncomplainingly picking up the task of supervising the Rural Team during my many absences. The clerical staff assisted in innumerable ways. I would particularly thank Peggy Simpkins for typing and re-typing this report and Simonne Fust for all of her assistance. The rest of the Agency staff kept me going with their interest and concern.

Outside of the Agency, a thank you to Dr. Barry Trute, my Faculty advisor who provided suggestions, direction and support, and to Dr. Liz Adkins for her work on the Practicum committee.

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INTRODUCTION

The vast array of archival material which is maintained today is testimony to the value which our society places on the survival of records. Governments expend huge amounts of money to maintain these records in their original form, and to ensure that information from them is not lost due to the deterioration of the technology with which they have been recorded. It is a well-established fact that without the efforts which are put into the maintenance of such records, valuable and irretrievable information would be lost.

Records serve to provide us with the history of individuals, of families, of communities, of countries, of cultures, and ultimately of the world. They assist us in examining and evaluating our past and in planning our future.

The foundation for this practicum is based on the belief that within existing records is information which is valuable from a descriptive, an evaluative and a comparative perspective. This report is an account of the development of an instrument to recover information from some very specialized records in the human service field.

The Project

In 1988, the Research Group of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba received a National Health and Welfare grant to fund a research project entitled "Child Sexual Abuse in Rural Community Settings - The Implementation and Evaluation of an

Exemplary Treatment Model". The proposal was submitted by Dr. Elizabeth Adkins and Dr. Barry Trute. The goal of the project was to design, implement and evaluate a coordinated service approach for the investigation and treatment of child sexual abuse in a rural locale in Manitoba. The major goals as stated by the Project were:

1. To implement a coordinated treatment approach involving: a) the integration of medical, legal, child welfare, and mental health services, b) the creation of treatment managers as essential actors in the coordination of sexual abuse cases, c) the provision of comprehensive treatment (i.e. group, couple, family, individual adult and child therapy) to all members of a family in which sexual abuse has occurred in which a family member or trusted third party was the perpetrator of the abuse.
2. To develop a standardized set of client and service-system tracking forms which would offer a prototype model for the monitoring of child sexual abuse services in rural areas.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the coordinated service approach through the analysis of a comparison geographic locale, and through intensive case analysis. The site which was chosen for the Research Project was the southern area of the Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba. The control site which was chosen was the southern area of Child and Family Services of Eastern Manitoba, which compares quite favorably in terms of its cultural and geographic make-up.

The Project was designed to run over the period of three years¹. This three years included phases of training, implementation, data collection and evaluation.

In conducting the study, a number of forms were developed to collect the information which it was believed would be useful. Registration forms were developed to track the individual families who came into contact with the Agency. Intake forms were developed to collect the appropriate information on each of these families. Contact record forms were developed to record all collateral contacts which were made by Agency workers during the investigative and treatment phase of the case. A large number of scales which measured progress in treatment were used on consenting families. Attitudes of individuals from the variety of professions involved were surveyed before and after the Project.

The Project made an effort to involve services other than Child and Family Services in the treatment of child sexual abuse cases and to collect data on the outcome of these cases. Also it sought to establish whether or not coordinated treatment resulted in a higher quality and quantity of service. Through the efforts of a number of agencies and organizations in the research area, groups for victims and adolescent offenders were run, individual, dyadic and family therapy was conducted, and a broad range of services were provided for the families in the area. The Research Project lasted from 1989 to the spring of 1991 with a data-

¹ Further information on this project may be obtained from Dr.'s Adkins or Trute, c/o Child and Family Services Research Group at the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba.

collection phase of approximately one year. Outcomes of the Project are being determined as this practicum report is being written. Literature on the outcomes will be available through the Research Group of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba and through Health and Welfare Canada.

In addition to this, the researchers believed that it would be of value to obtain information which might provide a picture of what services in the research and control areas looked like prior to the Project's implementation. This information would need to be collected from already existing child sexual abuse files. The examination of existing records is a data-collection methodology commonly used in conducting historical research. While studies of existing documents and artifacts are common in the literature, the study of child sexual abuse files is rare. In reality, it is only within the last several years that the problem of sexual abuse has been recognized as a serious social issue, efforts to deal with it have been made, and agencies have attempted to document it in any specialized way.

This report tells the story of the development of a file-auditing instrument for purposes of obtaining information from already existing child sexual abuse files. Its focus is on the skill development aspects of the process. Chapter One consists of a review of the literature beginning with record-keeping generally, and more specifically social work recording, including the variety of uses of social work records and the formats in which it generally found. Some comment is offered on methodologies employed

in conducting file audits. The review also presents a number of retrospective file-audit studies which serve to inform readers of the kinds of work which have been conducted in this area.

Chapter Two goes on to describe the setting of the practicum. Primarily, that setting was the southern portion of the Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba's area.

Chapter Three presents a chronological account of the activities undertaken by this student in fulfilling the practicum requirements. Chapter Four records the observations and outcomes of the work done by the student in preparing the instrument and applying it to actual files. It includes a synopsis of what was learned.

The Conclusions and Recommendations presented in Chapter Five contains suggestions and recommendations to the Agency, and to anyone wishing to undertake a similar activity.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

"If there is anything with which most helping professionals are familiar, it is records. Yet, while records are sometimes considered to be the professional's number one enemy, they can be extremely useful in helping measure the clients or client's/ systems problem. Archival records essentially are the data that are available from the records that are kept for various purposes not necessarily related to what you, as a practitioner, have in mind." (Bloom and Fisher, 1982).

These comments describe the essence of this particular practicum - the methodology of developing an instrument to collect information from records which were kept to serve interests which may not match your own.

To begin, one must examine the different types of records which exist.

Bloom and Fischer describe archival records as being of two basic types - public and private. Public records they consider to be records such as actuarial records, (i.e., birth, death, divorces, marriages, political and judicial records, governmental documents and mass media).

Private records are seen by the authors as generally being much less available than public records. They record occurrences in people's lives. The two key principles they note in the use of private records are:

#1 - obtaining client permission to examine them and

#2 - maintaining confidentiality about what you find.

Although the records of child welfare agencies document occurrences in people's lives, they would generally be considered to be public records. Their access is restricted to a fairly confined group of people who have need to know what exists on the record. This is consistent with the authors' contentions that not all public records may be available to everyone, and that they do include records which are truly open to the public and those which are collected by organizations and agencies and may not be widely available to all citizens. An argument might be made that the records of voluntary clients in child welfare agencies more closely match the qualities of private records.

The authors cite the study of both private and public records as one of the unobtrusive measures which a researcher might employ in order to conduct an evaluation or study of a particular problem.

This practicum is particularly concerned with the records of social workers. A review of the literature suggests that social work records are kept for many purposes. Primary among these are planning and recording of clinical interventions, supervision and teaching, evaluation of services and programs, organizational and professional accountability, research, administration, historical documentation and quality control. The literature also supports the contention that as the reasons for records being kept change and as the technology for processing information becomes more sophisticated, the usefulness of records at various levels in the

system as well is shifting, resulting in a demand for a different kind of information on files.

Jill Doner Kagle (1983), a leading author and researcher in the area of social work records, offers comment on the changes in the social work record in her presentation of the results of a survey of record-keeping in a variety of social work agencies and departments. The survey sought to describe and to analyze the factors that influenced record-keeping in social agencies of the day. Doner Kagle contends that the focus on costs and benefits in an era of diminished resources over the past number of years has resulted in social work emphasizing measurable outcomes. As a consequence, there have been increasing demands on social work records as a principal source of information about services, clients, workers, processes and outcomes. She regards social work records as being central to organizational and professional accountability. Doner Kagle notes that while in 1938, Hamilton suggested that administration, treatment, study, teaching and research were the purpose of records, in 1979 they were also being used in service, accounting, supervision, peer review, worker self-evaluation, information storage and retrieval, inter-professional communication, inter-organizational communication, and professional self-protection. She also notes that they can be used as a therapeutic tool. Doner Kagle recognizes case recording as a long-standing problem for the profession, and frequently a source of conflict between direct service workers and managers. Due to the delays which often happen in the real arena of serving the

immediate needs of clients, usefulness of records to the service process is often lost. Doner Kagle also notes that contents of records may reflect less a worker's style in practice than a worker's ability to write. Her involvement in the Social Work Records Project, which mailed questionnaires to administrators in 147 social agencies and social work departments in the United States in 1979, determined that a typical record of that time most often contained a social history, the worker's assessment of a client's situation, a goal statement, a service plan, progress notes, and a closing summary. Five fields of practice were included in the study: child welfare, family service, schools, health, and mental health. In conclusion, Doner Kagle states, "The record now functions first to facilitate service delivery. Its role in supervision is secondary. There has been a reciprocal change in the records focus from analysis to action, from process to product. These changes do not signal an end to the significance of the record in social work practice, but rather a new phase in its development." (page 153)

Kane (1974) also describes the crisis in credibility and the clamour for accountability which she envisioned to be present in the seventies. She cites the first task for social workers as individuals and in groups, being to prove that social work practice is capable of proceeding in a deliberate manner to achieve planned results. Kane suggested that armed with "the self-confidence that accompanies documentation, the profession faces the task of interpreting its activities to a myriad of others". Fulfilment of

this task requires accurate, clear and informative records of social work practice. She goes on in her article to make a case for the use of the problem-oriented record in improving the usefulness of social work records as both clinical, administrative, supervision, teaching, and research aids.

Doner Kagle (1984) notes another shift away from the use of social work records as clinical aids towards a focus on record-keeping as an administrative activity. She suggests that most social workers during the 1960's and 1970's were not prepared in the classroom, either to write or to record. Doner Kagle also notes that the increased access by accrediting bodies to social work records has had a tremendous effect on the kinds of recording which practitioners are inclined to do. That, accompanied by client's rights to confidentiality and government regulation of such has resulted in confusion over the kinds of things which should be recorded on a social work file. Doner-Kagle notes that recording has become an administrative, rather than a clinical activity, due to the change in focus from being a clinical to a management-oriented document. It is clear from the literature that the reasons for recording have changed substantially over the years.

An examination of the archival records of agencies and organizations indicates that along with the myriad of changes in the purpose and use of records, they are as well often incomplete and lacking standardization. While efforts have been made in some arenas of the helping professions to move towards more standardized

recording procedures, the majority of agencies are still fraught with the problem of inconsistency and missing information.

Specific to case recording in children's protective services, Streat (1987) analyzes some of the special problems which are faced by child protection agencies and child protection workers in maintaining accurate and useful recording. Streat suggests that approximately twenty-five percent of caseworker time and agency money are spent on records and recording, including the filling out of forms required by the agency. The problems faced in completing the task of adequate and useful recording are threefold: a) workers have insufficient time, b) caseload burdens are great, c) workers would rather be in the field working with clients than doing paperwork. She also suggests that wordy case recording is difficult to assess. Supervisors often never read what is recorded and valuable information is lost. She concurs with Doner Kagle and Kane that the demand for case records seems to be increasing due to the requirements of funding sources and organizations outside the profession. In presenting a framework for designing a case recording format, Streat lists a number of purposes for case records. These include the maintenance of information about clients who are served by the agency, allowing supervisors to review services and become aware of cases that are stalemated, quality assurance and the documentation that legal mandates have been met, assessment and planning, accountability to funding sources, research and evaluation, documentation concerning the compliance with standards to prevent workers from liability suits,

et cetera. Streat goes one step further and suggests a case-recording format, intended to meet as many of these requirements as possible. The first phase of the format is the Intake phase which includes the collection of basic data common to all clients (i.e. names, birthdates, case numbers, location, telephone, et cetera). Streat suggests that the next phase should be a planning stage. This stage needs to include a problem statement, treatment goals, and specific tasks to be completed by both the client and the worker. Inclusion of a goal-attainment scale or task completion chart is suggested as being useful for reinforcing progress. The third phase or termination phase should include a final case evaluation by both the worker and the client, indicating the degree of progress that has been made and recommendations by the worker for the client to follow after closure.

In conducting this literature review, it became clear that one profession which has often utilized the information from existing records to analyze, evaluate and plan for the future, has been the medical profession. Weinstein (1975) credits Weed, (1969), Grant, Grant and Moletzky (1972), Smith, Holly and Grant, (1974) for the development of the problem-oriented medical record. It is his contention that the development of this system of record-keeping in the medical profession has enhanced the capability of researchers to elicit information from existing records. Weinstein puts forward a strong case for the use of computerized record-keeping programs which make possible both the collection and analysis of specific and consistent information. He strongly recommends that

record and information systems should not be considered static. They should be structured as flexibly as possible and should be subject to periodic review. As experience is gained, revisions in the record and information system will be necessary.

In the Social Service Department of the New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston, an information reporting and summarization system has been implemented. LaBianca and Cubelli, (1976) describe the system as a combination of a data collecting instrument and a data processing system. The strength of this system is that it allows social workers to abstract and summarize and consequently present a generalized view of the client and the experience. The authors believe that data collecting instruments are not unlike case records of social workers in that both contain only limited or abstracted amounts of information about clients. Both allow for short or long records about clients. The strengths which they see in the data collection format as opposed to the case record format is that the data collection instrument enables one to record in a systematic fashion, information that repeats from one client to the next. Their strength is in standardization, their usefulness in their ability to record observations of recurring qualities or regularities in a manner that allows one to know with what quantity they are dealing. The authors do indicate one caution and state that only qualities that are capable of being described in words are also potentially quantifiable. So data collection instruments are only as precise as are the meanings of the words and expressions contained in them. The authors make the case that with

computerization agencies can collect this information on literally thousands of cases, comparing and tabulating recurrences. As well, the authors put forward the notion that while the traditional case study and the quantitative method are different from each other, they can complement each other in a very encompassing way.

Bommer, Goodgion, Pease, and Zmud (1977) present a review of the goal attainment scaling method which consists of an individualized treatment plan with a number of specific goals for the client. This format for recording the clinical progress of a client is based on the philosophical basis of self-determination. The clinical planning piece is accompanied by a data base comprised of two types, background information and treatment information. In designing the data collection form, the researchers attempted to conform to a sample of intake forms utilized by child abuse and neglect agencies. Non-typical data included in the file pertain to indepth description of client family, treatment plan and data on the resources utilized in serving the client family. Authors saw as the greatest benefit of the information system, the ability to generate information to facilitate decision making and planning at all levels in the child abuse and neglect service system. This particular approach particularly reflects a desire to meet the many needs which child welfare information systems and records are required to address.

In spite of the developments of some standardized approaches, a major issue in the use of file recording for purposes of analysis continues to be a lack of consistent and comprehensive recording

formats. In fact, the implementation of such formats cannot be considered as an immediate solution to all record-keeping problems. Edwards and Reid (1989) conducted an assessment of social worker reactions to the implementation of a structured case recording format in child welfare agencies in fifty-seven New York counties outside of New York City. Data collection was completed through survey instruments in each of the fifty-seven locales. The staff development coordinators were asked to distribute these surveys to child welfare workers in their department, collect the instruments and return them. Forty-two of the fifty-seven departments included in the survey, a total of 656 individuals, completed the instrument and returned it. Responses to the survey found that most workers were dissatisfied with the structured case recording format which had been implemented, and in fact felt that it had increased the amount of time spent doing recording, rather than decreasing it. Explanations offered for the high level of dissatisfaction were that the program had been in place for only one year, staff had not given up their old recording practices and therefore were expending time using both the old and the new, not enough time had been spent with staff in determining what their needs were in recording, and that the focus on only child welfare workers may have limited the kinds of responses that other service providers might have made. The overriding concern which was raised in the study was that social work record formats, particularly structured case recording formats, if set up to meet exclusively the needs of managers, and not the needs of front-line workers, may not be as successful as

managers might hope. It is clear that while the solution may appear simple, it can be more complex than it first appears.

The search for information on the methodology of file audits proved to be a difficult, albeit interesting one. In many ways, it became easier to define what file audits were not than it was to define what they were. This Practicum, although born out of a larger Research Project, was a study in methodology as opposed to a well-defined and strictly controlled empirical study. File audits appeared to be utilized more often as one methodology amongst a number of approaches, as opposed to an exclusive approach for the collection of information. Regardless of whether it is used alone or as part of a larger project, the use of archival records for the collection of information is considered to be of the category of unobtrusive measures.

Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Sechrest (1966) devote two chapters in their book "Unobtrusive Measures: Non-reactive Research in the Social Sciences" to the exploration of the use of archives in research. They observe that besides the low cost of acquiring massive amounts of pertinent data, one common advantage of archival material is non-reactivity. While they acknowledge the possibility of substantial errors in the material, they also note it is not usual to find masking or sensitivity because the producer of the data knows he is being studied by a social scientist. The authors note "the risks of error implicit in archival sources are not trivial, but, to repeat our litany, if they are recognized and accounted for by multiple measurement techniques, the errors need

not preclude use of the data." (page 53). The authors acknowledge also that sometimes the running record is spotty and it is difficult to determine if the missing part can be adequately estimated by a study of the rest. There are two major sources of bias in archival records which are noted. They are:

1. Selective deposit or the question of whether records have been kept on all members of the group being studied or on only a subset of the group.
2. Selective survival or the question of whether or not all records have survived.

The authors describe a large number of studies involving the uses of existing records. A few examples of these include the use of actuarial records, political and judicial records, government records, and media records. All of these are running or continuous records which are kept over long periods of time. The authors devote another chapter to episodic and private records. The three major sources of these records are sales records, institutional records and personal documents. The authors note that for some research purposes there are few alternatives to archives. They note that in a limited content area the archival record at times provides the dependent variable. Less often, it provides the medium through which theoretical principles are tested and more often it is used for indirect evidence in the studies. Sproull (1988) refers to the use of the retrospective pre-test in the use of historical research designs. Sproull concurs with Webb, et al. (1966) on the issue of advantages and disadvantages to the use of

historical data in conducting a research study. She differentiates between the primary and secondary sources of historical data. Primary sources she regards as being first-hand recordings of data or the actual data themselves as in the case of physical artifacts. The chief characteristics of primary sources she outlines are:

1. Being present during the experience, event or time, and
2. Consequently being close in time with the data.

Secondary sources differ in that the recorders were not present at the event. She observes the same problems with the lack of control over the data-collection methods of historical information or artifacts. Sproull also addresses the issue of examination of documents, materials and artifacts as a data-collection method. The methodology process which Sproull outlines for the data-collection process is as follows.

1. Define the known population of phenomena very specifically.
2. Determine the method for sampling the phenomena
 - i The sampling unit for a document might be a page, a paragraph, or even a sentence
 - ii The sampling unit for physical artifacts is usually the artifact itself or a group of such artifacts.
3. Find an existing instrument or generate a new instrument to record the pertinent information about the variables*.
4. Examine primary and secondary sources for desired information.
5. Evaluate the authenticity of the source and, for human sources, their expertise and reputation.

* Sources may need to be examined prior to generating an instrument.

Sproull addresses the issue of unobtrusive measures in the data-collection process and outlines the advantages and disadvantages which have been previously referred to in the Webb material on unobtrusive measures. As well, she outlines the most important factors in designing an instrument for existing data as being:

1. A format and categories which prompt the data collector to record the most appropriate information in the desired form, and
2. Instructions to encourage (and a place to record) unanticipated findings.

Sproull addresses the issue of the decision about whether to design an instrument or to utilize an existing instrument. Since the primary purpose of the Practicum was to design an instrument for the retrieval of information from child sexual abuse files, the authors comments on selection of an instrument will not be covered here. Sproull states that to design an instrument where:

1. The content measures the variables of interest
2. Acceptable levels of appropriate types of validity and reliability are yielded
3. The appropriate levels of measurement are produced
4. Interpretation of the instrument is easy
5. The time for administration is appropriate, and
6. Costs are within the allotted budget, one should follow the following process:

- i List the variables which will be measured by the content of the instrument.
- ii Select the type of instrument you wish to use
- iii Follow the designed procedures for the type of instrument selected
- iv Check that the content measures the selected variables.
- v Check that the level of measurement for each variable is appropriate for the research question or hypothesis and statistical analysis
- vi Pilot test the instrument with the samples similar to the study sample, but not included in the study
- vii Assess the appropriate validities and reliabilities using the pilot test data
- viii Evaluate the time required for SS to take the instrument and the ease of interpretation of results using the pilot test data
- ix Re-design the instrument if it does not yield the desired information in the appropriate form, or if validity and reliability co-efficiency are too low or if directions or sequencing yield poor results or if it takes too much time.

The auditing of existing records is a generally accepted form of data collection which is considered to be "unobtrusive". File audits are typically conducted as one method in a larger evaluation or study, or are utilized on their own as the methodology of choice in retrieving information from already existing records. For

example, the concept of "quality assurance" includes retrospective chart audits along with profile analysis, clinical care evaluation studies, continued stay utilization review, and peer reviews as examples of methodologies employed in quality assurance evaluations. This review will necessarily concentrate on records audits as a methodology of choice, given the limits of time available.

In spite of the problems which are evident in the consistency of record-keeping in the field of social work, and particularly in the field of child protection, this student contends that a large amount of very useful information can be gleaned from child protection files. While specific studies in the area of child sexual abuse are not plentiful, the study of case records in many other fields connected to and including child welfare support this claim. Stadum (1990) outlines the result of a review of some of the earliest records in existence in the field of social services. The study included the analysis and data collection of case records of social workers working with female heads of poor households, receiving relief during the years of 1900 to 1930. A study of the records indicated "an array of worker activity and inactivity that adds detail to the concept of control as implemented by social services historically". The study was able to define the parameters of casework at the time. It indicated a limit on time and energy available, a lack of training to help workers understand the precarious living of the poor, a lack of supervision of workers in a field that was amateur in its understanding of human behaviour

and social and economic environment. The study also indicated that workers were representatives of a prominent agency and captive to their own views and that of the dominant society. There was an indication of a clear distinction of class lines between the giver and the recipient. Case records also indicated that workers were only marginally effective in regulating households as the women in these homes selectively and actively resisted intervention as they saw fit. A final analysis of the information collected suggested that "many social workers in family casework agencies lacked vision and more critically, they lacked outrage at the pain systematically inflicted by naivetism, sexism, and capitalism. The record suggests, however, that the poor never expected that social workers would render social justice. It remains to be seen if the profession holds that expectation for itself." (page 96)

Kagle (1987) presents the findings of a study on the secondary prevention of substance abuse, which included the study of social work records. A study of case findings and referral in four social work programs including twenty-five representative case records from each of the programs were included as a part of a larger study of social work recording. Records were to demonstrate types of cases served and styles of recording used in agencies or departments. Cases were to have been active within the previous year. Agency records were never removed from the agency and the privacy of clients was protected through obscuring identifying information. In this case, a request was made that workers who had written the records also participate in a brief research interview.

Four agencies included in the study represented the following fields of practice: child welfare, family service, mental health and health. None of these agencies had an in-house alcohol or drug treatment program. Each record was reviewed to determine whether workers had noted substance abuse as a problem for the client, had discussed it as a problem with the client, and had referred the client or significant others for alcohol or drug treatment. In total this study included the review of one hundred case records. Interviews were held to discuss eighty-five of the one hundred cases. This study presented some interesting conclusions about the low percentage of referrals which are made in relation to drug and alcohol abuse, and the reasons for workers not making decisions to refer. The study also presents as a combination of both a retrospective file audit and an interview format in collecting the relevant information.

Flaherty, Barry and Swift (1978) described the use of an unobtrusive measure for the evaluation of inter-agency coordination. The unobtrusive measure which is utilized in this case again is the evaluation of existing records. This study utilized existing records to assess the activities of the early prevention project for high risk children, and particularly the goal of staff developing a consultive and coordinated service. In this study, examination of existing records was determined to be the procedure of choice, as opposed to a questionnaire, direct observation of staff activity, and a daily log. The use of records for evaluation, although identified as not being problem-free, had

the advantage of not being subject to memory limitations, and not being impacted on by the "guinea-pig"¹ effect. Outcomes of the study indicated that there were three primary disadvantages for the use of this method. The first was selective deposit, or existing records rarely being a complete record of the events they are meant to document. The second major disadvantage was selective survival, meaning that missing records may not be a random selection of all records. The third disadvantage was viewed as not being a disadvantage in all cases, but only where the expenditure of dollars was a major issue. The study of these records required five worker-weeks to collect and analyze and the expense of such a procedure may have been a disadvantage for services where available staff time was limited and the fiscal situation was tenuous. Advantages to the use of this method included the validity of the information collected is considered to be strong since there was no opportunity for the guinea pig effect. The second advantage was seen as the unobtrusiveness of the method; the more important the content area of the evaluation, the greater the advantage of an unobtrusive measure. The third advantage of the use of existing records was seen to be that they frequently allowed the evaluation of activities which would otherwise be lost. The authors present a strong but balanced argument for the use of the study of existing records in evaluating programs.

¹ Effect on behavior caused by presence of researchers.

As stated previously, the numbers of studies which have been related specifically to retrospective auditing of child abuse files has been fairly limited. However, a number do exist.

Tader and Wilde (1980) present the findings of a study that was conducted on the movement of children through the child welfare and judicial systems. The goals of their research were:

- #1 - To discover whether there were prior judicial findings of abuse or protection in the history of the individual child, and if so whether this evidence was admitted in the protection proceedings under investigation, and to discover the possible effects of admission or non-admission of any such evidence on the disposition;
- #2 - To assess the relationships between the recommendations of the Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto in respect of disposition and the actual judicial order made.

The initial intent of this study was to review the records of the provincial family court division in Metropolitan Toronto and augment that information with the records of the Children's Aid Society. Upon completion of their pre-test, however, it was concluded that the provincial court records would have been difficult to access since most of them had not been transcribed. As an alternative to the original plan, a decision was made to use the Children's Aid Society records as the primary data source and to resort to records of the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children to cross-check data and supply missing information from the Society's

records. It is of interest to note that while the Society's records were certainly seen as lacking in certain information, they were also seen as the most complete data base available. The authors outlined two major problems with the records of the Children's Aid Society. The first of these was the recurrent problem of a lack of a standardized or structured method of recording for both the social and legal case information. It was difficult to determine whether factors were not involved in a particular case or whether a case worker had not seen fit to record them. Many files were found to be missing documents or missing detail that made them almost unusable. Another observation was that some records were found to be more complete than others. The variance in records seemed to be due to the competence of and the time available to the particular case worker compiling them. It appeared that files consistently contained summaries of various court hearings. Records made in later years were more complete as workers had begun to use standardized forms. Hospital records were not used extensively. A finding related to these records was that while Society records were entered under the legal names of the parents and all other possible names, the legal name of the child and all known aliases, etc., files in the hospital were indexed under the name of the child alone. No apparent attempt to confirm the legality of the name or of the parents' names seemed to have occurred. After cases had been ruled out for a number of reasons, the project was left with a sample of 106 child abuse cases for its study. A survey of Society records to determine what variables

were most consistently found was conducted and a total of twenty-seven variables were isolated for study. The findings of this particular study were reasonably broad and resulted in three major recommendations:

#1 - Records - Serious effort should be taken to upgrade the records of child protection agencies. A structured and systematic method of recording should be established with workers who are responsible for ensuring that specified information is recorded. Further, efforts must be made to standardize the records of all agencies in order that they might more effectively coordinate their assistance to children, records should be uniformly filed under the name of either the parent or the child and all agencies must make greater attempts to establish the legal name of the child and parents with a catalogue of any aliases. Where possible, and regardless of the existence of any central child abuse registry, records of one agency should be cross-referenced with all those of other agencies in order that workers be aware of all treatment and contact with the parent, the child or both.

#2 - Delay - Court should undertake to restrict the number of adjournments in protection cases, first by careful scrutiny of the reasons given and second by more efficient scheduling in court administration.

#3 - Interim Placement of Children - Protection authorities must give greater consideration to the placement of a

child into care during adjournments pending the disposition of the case in light of the statistics that do not reveal any coherent grounds for the child's detention during this interval. Thus it might be preferable for the child to remain at home under close and diligent supervision. Removal of a child from his or her home should never be a decision made in haste or to serve administrative convenience.

Caplan, Waters, White, Harry and Bates (1984) present findings of research conducted on a grant from the Hospital for Sick Children Foundation and funded by the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry. This was a study of 486 cases listed by the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto as suspected or confirmed child abuse cases which were known as well to CAS during that time. During the five year period of study, records were reviewed if they could be located in both agencies for review. Data was collected from clinical records. Researchers considered a number of factors related to each of the cases in an effort to determine whether their findings would be similar or different from findings in other countries related to child abuse. The final results of this study indicated that most factors were similar to studies being done in other countries.

Another study related to predicting the recurrence of child abuse was conducted by Johnson and L'Esperance (1984). This study involved the review of a random sample of 120 cases of physical abuse from the files of a public social service agency in a large,

urban California county. This study examined characteristics of cases in an attempt to develop a correlation between certain characteristics and the probability of re-occurrence of abuse. The authors contended that the analysis showed that reasonably accurate predictions of the recurrence of physical abuse could be made using case characteristics.

In conclusion, an overview of the literature related to social work records, and particularly child protection records, indicates that while records are often inconsistent and incomplete, they are also often more complete than the records of other agencies, and can serve as the source of a great deal of valuable information for researchers and evaluators. The literature presents a strong case for the development of standardized record-keeping formats, along with careful implementation strategies. A review of the literature related to actual retrospective file audits indicates that auditing has been an important element in evaluation and research. Indications are that the search for information from more recent records will be more successful than the search for information from the earlier social work records as improvements and demands for information have increased.

It is also evident that social work records in many ways reflect the development of new administrative and clinical requirements. In earlier times they reflected a clinical perspective and an emphasis on teaching and learning for practitioners. In recent times they reflect a demand for accountability and evaluation. As computerization allows for

immediate management access to information, the expectation that a different kind of information be recorded will become more and more acute.

CHAPTER TWO
THE SETTING FOR THE PRACTICUM

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THE SETTING FOR THE PRACTICUM

The focus of this practicum is concentrated on the development of a file-auditing instrument which is intended to collect information from already existing child sexual abuse files. In order to fully understand and appreciate the complexities of fulfilling the practicum, an understanding of the context within which it was carried out is essential. Major changes to the provincial system occurred in July of 1991. The setting described is that which existed prior to those changes occurring.

Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba, the primary site of this Practicum, was one of eight private agencies in the province of Manitoba, all of whom provided services mandated under the Child and Family Services Act (previous to 1985, the Child Welfare Act). In the City of Winnipeg and the southern regions of the province, these services are delivered by private agencies, although in the northern regions they are delivered directly by government departments. Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba is responsible for the delivery of all of these services in the Central Region of Manitoba. The Agency has existed since 1934. It is governed by a Board of Directors who are elected from a membership. Memberships can be purchased for one dollar, and are open to any adult except staff from the Agency resident in the catchment area.

Funding

Funding for the Agency is provided primarily by government, although the Agency has accumulated a fairly large private fund over the years. Private funds are accessed only for projects which government does not fund. Funding patterns have fluctuated over the years. For the duration of this practicum, the Agency received a block service and administration grant for salaries and operating costs, a family support grant intended to prevent children from coming into care and from moving to a higher level of care, and a special rate grant to augment services to children in care over and above the regular rate. The province reimburses the Agency regular rate for each child who comes into care on a per diem basis.

Private agencies have, to some degree, more freedom in setting priorities, establishing internal guidelines and developing structures which respond to their geographic and service needs. Consequently, this Agency does not necessarily look like all other private agencies or government agencies in the province. Three teams of social workers served the region at the start of the Practicum. They were North Team, South Team and Permanency Planning Team.

Working in the Southern area from Child and Family Services at the time of the Practicum were a total of three child abuse workers, four family service workers, one single parent/permanent ward worker, one foster care worker and one staff support worker. These people all worked under the supervision of the South Team Supervisor. Adoption services at the time of the practicum were provided by a worker based in the north. All clerical, support

services, and a centralized filing system are located in the Portage la Prairie offices. The southern offices are serviced by FAX machines and answering machines, in addition to the on-sight worker response. After-hours services are delivered out of the Portage la Prairie office to the entire region.

A. The Mandate

Services which are mandated by the Child and Family Services Act include the following:

1. Child Protection Services, including the investigation of alleged child abuse and neglect.
2. Family Services, including counselling and family support services such as homemakers, parent aides, etc., as well as services to minor parents.
3. Foster Care Services, including the recruitment, assessment and approval of foster homes for the placement of children who come into the care of the agencies.
4. Services to Children in Care.
5. Adoption and Post Legal Services, including the assessment and registration of adoptive applicants and services to adult adoptees seeking information about or reunification with their birth families.

In this Agency, these services were at one time delivered by generic workers responsible for a geographic area. Around the time that the files reviewed for the Practicum were being opened (1986, 1987, 1988), the Agency moved to service provision by specialized

workers on generic geographical teams. This was a significant factor in the decision to choose the central region as a site for the larger Child Sexual Abuse Research project. A necessary characteristic of the Agency to be involved in the project included the separation of the role of investigative abuse worker from the role of treatment worker within the Agency. The specialized model which existed in the Agency prior to the project's beginning enabled researchers to implement the Research model without significant changes in structure to the Agency.

Geographic and Cultural Profile of the Area

For the past number of years, the north and south areas of the Agency catchment area have been split as the Agency has moved towards a more community-based model of service. Office sites have been established in two southern communities, Carman and Winkler, along with the head office in Portage la Prairie. The map included in the appendix indicates the geographic split of the area at the time of the practicum.

The national research project was located only in the southern portion of the Agency, due to the need to focus on a definable and manageable client group. As well, this practicum in refining and testing the file audit instrument concentrated on files only from the southern part of the catchment area.

The cultural make-up of this southern area is extremely diverse. In the southernmost areas, the population is largely of German Mennonite descent, and is characterized by a large number

and variety of Mennonite churches. Included in this milieu are a significant number of Latin-American Mennonites, generally a Spanish/German speaking transient population who travel between Mexico/Paraguay and various parts of Canada. These individuals generally subscribe to the Old Colony Mennonite Church, espousing a fundamentalist approach to religion. Their transient lifestyle, rejection of state-run education and consequent poverty have always presented a large number of service concerns for the Agency. As well as the Mennonite population, the northwestern corner of the area is characterized by a number of French-speaking communities, largely of Catholic background who are involved primarily in agricultural pursuits. A significant number of Dutch families reside in the Carman area along with a community of artists and craftsmen in the Roseisle area. As well, quite a number of Hutterite Colonys are found in the area and one Indian Reserve.

This area has a strong agricultural base and consequently a great many small communities. The largest communities in the area are Carman, Morris, Winkler, Altona, Morden and Manitou. The multitude of communities and the proximity of Winnipeg to the eastern part of the area make service at times difficult due to the various traffic patterns and the many choices available to families about where they do business. The large distances are at times problematic to specialized workers who must cover large areas.

The primary social services in the area include Child and Family Services, Government Services such as Community Corrections (Probation), Rehabilitation and Community Living Services,

Continuing Care, Community Mental Health, et cetera, as well as the Eden Mental Health Center which is a private residential and out-patient facility located in Winkler and serving patients throughout the region. Most of the larger communities have hospitals and community health centres or clinics. A total of eight school divisions serve the area. Winkler and Morden are serviced by town police forces, and the remainder of the area is served by the R.C.M.P. The large number of detachments in the area as well, at times complicates the work of child abuse investigators.

The Agency Filing System

Critical to the description of this practicum site is a description of the Agency file system, given that the practicum involves the development of an auditing instrument for existing files.

In this Agency, files are opened on a numerical basis, utilizing a manual system with no automation. At the time that a new intake (request or referral for service) comes into the Agency, the Agency receptionist assigns a new number to the file which is then opened under whichever category a supervisor has designated. If children come into care as a consequence of the activity on the file, the letters A, B, C, et cetera will be assigned to the children's files along with the original family file number. A separate file is opened on each child only if they come into the care of the Agency. Categories under which files may be opened are designated according to the section of the Act under which the

required service falls. For example all child abuse cases would be opened as Part III - Child Abuse as they are serviced under Part III of the Child and Family Services Act, and the particular service category is child abuse. A copy of this Agency's file categories is included in the appendix of this document.

Upon receipt of any intake at the Agency, one of the first steps which is expected to be taken by an intake worker is to check the name in the card index to determine if there has been prior contact with the family. In the event that a prior contact has occurred and a file exists on the family, the original file is re-opened as opposed to a brand new file being opened. Exceptions to this would include foster care, single parent, adoption, and ward files, all of which would remain intact, unless the new service required is of the same service category as before. Upon assigning a new file a number, or re-opening an old file, the Agency receptionist records the opening in a log book. There are approximately seven complete log books in the possession of the Agency at this time. All files which have been opened since April 1, 1950 are recorded in these books. At some time, a fire destroyed the books which logged files numbered 1 to 3500. At the time that the files which were audited in this practicum were opened, the procedure was to go back to the file's original number in the book and record the re-opening and closing at that spot in the book, as opposed to recording the re-opening on the current page of the book.

This procedure presents a problem in terms of tracking files which were opened on particular dates. Not all files which are opened in a specified year appear in the same place in the book. Files which had been opened previously were recorded in other places in the book, so all of the log books must be searched each time the Agency required listings of files for any reason.

Each time a new referral comes in on a file, whether that be an opened or closed file, or a brand new service, a file category must be designated. If an abuse referral comes in on an already open abuse file, the file category will not be changed, however if a family service file is open on a family and an abuse referral is received on the family, the file will be immediately reclassified as a child abuse file. If a family service intake came in on an already open child abuse file, the file would not be reclassified unless the abuse concerns had already been dealt with. Files are never reclassified downward in terms of their seriousness, unless the serious issues have been dealt with. Occasions do occur where this procedure is overlooked and files are not reclassified at the time of a new intake. These are generally picked up on the next time a referral comes in on the family.

In this Agency, all open and closed files are kept separate from each other. All open files are in a locked filing cabinet on a main floor of the Agency in the clerical area. All closed files, with the exception of adoption files, are maintained in a fire-retardant room in the basement of the Agency. They are easily accessible to staff who wish to check on the contents of closed

files or to pull them for re-opening. All adoption files are sealed once the adoption is finalized and are placed in a vault in the Agency basement. These files cannot be unsealed unless special permission is received from the Executive Director of the Agency. Staff in sub-offices are allowed to remove files from the central office under the condition that they maintain them in metal filing boxes and ensure that if they are left in vehicles the vehicles are locked or that they are filed in the sub-office. Cards indicating who has the file in their possession must be left in the filing cabinet in the central office to indicate where the file is being maintained. No file can be opened, closed or transferred without supervisory authorization.

The Physical Plants

The physical plants out of which the Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba are delivered includes a main office located in Portage la Prairie and two sub-offices located in the South area. The Portage office has appropriate office space as well as a large board room and two interview rooms, a library resource room, a family visiting room, accounting and clerical areas, and a coffee room. Offices in the south include facilities which allow for office space for staff who are resident of the area, interview rooms, meeting rooms, and coffee/waiting room areas.

Although the nature of social work in child welfare generally requires a great deal of in-home visiting, a large portion of the treatment which is provided in this Agency is provided out of the

Child and Family Services offices. Interview rooms are equipped with video equipment and one-way mirrors. Family visits also often occur on Agency premises to allow for supervised contact between parents and their children.

Resource Services - Foster Care and Family Support

The Agency is also responsible for resourcing the children who come into its care.

One foster care coordinator assumes responsibility for the northern portion of the Agency, and one assumes responsibility for the southern portion. The Agency has a total of approximately one hundred foster homes which are in the various stages of application, home study, approval, or operation at any one time. While this area would be considered to be relatively rich in terms of foster care resources as compared to some other areas of the province, there are still major shortages of appropriate foster homes for teenagers and children who are particularly troubled.

As well as foster care resources, the Agency at times provides homemaking and parent aide services to families, either on a voluntary or on a protection basis. The large geographic area, and the relatively sparse population in some areas has made it difficult for this Agency to maintain a substantial number of homemakers who are prepared to be available to the Agency at any time. Consequently, most of these services are delivered on a case-by-case basis using individuals who have been recruited either by the family or by the Agency for a very short period of time. It

would be accurate to state that while a homemaking service is provided, a homemaking program does not exist.

Service Accountability

Accountability within the Agency for service delivery is ensured in a number of different ways. The primary mechanism for accountability is within the supervisor-worker relationship. A supervision protocol exists within the Agency which outlines the times when workers must have supervisory authorization for their actions. As well the Board has in place a policy related to the yearly evaluation of staff upon which recommendation of the yearly increment is made. This increment is dependent upon positive performance.

In all cases where apprehensions occur, within four juridical days the worker is required to file in Family Court. On all apprehensions, consultation with the Agency solicitor occurs if the child is intended to remain in care. As well, on all child abuse cases the case is required by legislation to be brought before the Agency's Child Abuse Committee which reviews the information from the file and hears a verbal presentation from the worker, and makes a decision regarding whether or not they believe that abuse has occurred, and whether the alleged abuser has abused the child. These Committees came into effect in 1987, so that files which were reviewed for this auditing instrument from the year 1986 were not presented to the Child Abuse Committee.

In this Agency, a high percentage of cases are resolved outside of the Family Court system, even when initial apprehensions occur on the file. Over three years, eighty-seven apprehensions occurred in the Agency and only one contested hearing was actually held. Most cases are resolved through the process of contracting with the family and/or bringing the child into care under a Voluntary Placement Agreement. In some situations, Consent Orders are obtained for a shorter duration in order to begin the treatment process and give the family time to think about other options that are before them. In situations where clients are unhappy with the way that their case has been managed, an Appeal Grievance Procedure is in place in the Agency and the option exists for clients to follow it in hope of resolving their unhappiness in a constructive way.

A high level of staff training is maintained in this Agency. Even during times of high stress on budgets, staff training has remained a priority. Due to the specialized nature of worker's roles, staff training is able to be channelled in very specific directions. Along with yearly allocations, the Agency has sponsored workshops over the past couple of years which have been extremely beneficial to staff in their learning.

Accountability to the community is maintained through the election of the community Board as well as through the appointment of Community members to the Child Abuse Committee.

This is the setting within which this Practicum was carried out.

CHAPTER THREE

ACTIVITIES

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The proposal for this practicum was submitted on June 5, 1989 to Dr. Barry Trute, this student's advisor at the University of Manitoba. Primary supervision for the project was provided by Dr. Trute. Additional consultation was available from Dennis Schellenberg, Executive Director of Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba, who is a member of the practicum committee. In addition, Elizabeth Adkins was a member of the practicum committee. Dr. Adkins was a co-principal investigator in the Research Project and was very familiar with the area and the Practicum goals.

During the month of May, 1989, this student attended the University of Manitoba on a daily basis in order to begin the literature review which would assist in defining the parameters of the practicum and in informing the writer on the various areas of content which would be required to complete the practicum. The primary areas of interest considered to be pertinent at the time included: a) information on archival records, and specifically social work records b) information on the uses and changes in record keeping and information management in the field of child welfare, c) information on the specific methodology of standardized record audits and the contexts in which they are used, d) information on inter-disciplinary approaches to the investigation and treatment of child sexual abuse. What became most obvious at the time of the literature review was the vast breadth of the information which was available on some of the sub-topics and the necessity of confining the practicum to a more narrow focus in

order to be able to accomplish it in the period of time which was allowed. It became clear that since the emphasis would necessarily need to be on the development of an auditing instrument, information on this data-collection methodology would be pertinent. The area of record-keeping in Social Work and particularly in child protection would be relevant. The specific area of child sexual abuse, while relevant, is so vast it is difficult to include in the practicum study itself. In December, 1989, after full consideration of all of the directions that the practicum might take, a final proposal was submitted.

The initial practicum proposal was essentially to create an instrument which could track child sexual abuse cases through the phases of investigation, and treatment from a multi-agency perspective. The initial title of the proposal was "Tracking Child Sexual Abuse Cases: The Development of a Protocol for Multi-agency File Audits". The impetus for the development of the practicum came out of the existence of the Child Sexual Abuse in Rural Community Settings Research Project which was operational in the southern portion of the central region of Manitoba at the time of this student's tenure in the master's program. The goal of that project as stated previously was to develop, implement and evaluate a model for the inter-disciplinary treatment of child sexual abuse. There was some belief that it might be possible to track the movement of child sexual abuse cases through the system prior to the beginning of the project. As well, the intent of the practicum was to develop an instrument which would be versatile enough to be

used in any agency which conducted child sexual abuse investigations. In short, the purpose of the practicum was to develop an instrument which would be helpful in accomplishing the goals of the project as well as be helpful in other agencies should they choose to consider evaluating their service patterns or file contents in this way. Examples of the questions which it was anticipated the information gleaned by the auditing instrument might be useful in answering were:

1. What are service patterns in the detection and treatment of child sexual abuse at this point in time?
2. How do present patterns differ from the way they looked before?
3. What are the characteristics of these families?
4. Are there weaknesses or gaps in service which appear over time?
5. Are there strengths in service patterns which can be identified?

While the Project was developing formats which would collect information which would come directly from clients at the time of a new investigation, the retrospective file audit instrument was intended to collect information from files which were designed to meet information needs of particular agencies, who may or may not have had intentions of collecting this specific evaluative data at the time that their file-recording practices were put in place.

Between January and March of 1990, two major activities were undertaken in order to get the practicum under way. The first of

these was the development of the sampling frame. The sample which was chosen in this case included all of the child sexual abuse cases from the years 1986, 1987, and 1988. These three years are the three years immediately prior to the project's beginning. An analysis of these three years could possibly provide insight into changes which occurred as a consequence of the implementation of the Project in the area as well as providing the sample necessary to refine the instrument. In order to develop the sampling frame, two activities were required. The first of these included this student searching the log books in which the Agency records the opening and closing of all files. As indicated earlier in this report, files are opened and closed and re-opened at the same place in the book which they were originally opened. There were 18,480 files listed in the books in March of 1990. It was necessary to review all of the listings in order to ensure that the most comprehensive listing possible occurred. A research assistant from the University of Manitoba completed the exercise for a second time to ensure that oversights had not occurred. At the conclusion of this exercise, all of the files which had been gathered from this three-year period were pulled from their open or closed filing spots and reviewed to determine whether they were physical or sexual abuse. This exercise resulted in a listing of fifty-two child sexual abuse investigations for the three-year period.

The second activity which was being undertaken at the same time was the development of the instrument to be used in auditing child sexual abuse files. It was believed by this student and by

the faculty and Agency advisors and supported by the literature on Audit Protocols, that it would be useful to review material and questionnaires which were already available in order to determine whether or not they could provide a foundation for the practicum instrument. As a consequence, the intake and registration forms which were developed for the Project which were based to a large extent on the Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program in San Jose, California (Kroth, 1979), along with internal Agency forms such as the Child Abuse Committee Review form and the standardized Agency Intake form were examined in order to determine whether or not they could be amended to perform this additional function. It was decided that the Intake and Registration forms would provide a good foundation for the beginning of the Audit Instrument. Another factor in the decision to utilize existing forms was that the information which was collected would possibly be compatible with the information which was being collected for the Project, and would then make the information potentially useful for further research purposes. It should be remembered that at the time the practicum was begun, the intent was to develop an auditing instrument with which to conduct a multi-agency audit. As a consequence of the beginning work on child sexual abuse files being done by the child welfare agency, the beginnings of the auditing instrument were developed to address the service patterns within the child welfare agency. It was this student's intention at the time to develop additional service forms which could be paired with the audit forms from Child and Family Service's cases. Draft one

of the Child Sexual Abuse File Audit Instrument represents a combination of the forms which were being used by the Project, information from the Child Abuse Committee Review forms and other internal Agency forms, and information which this student believed might be available on child sexual abuse files, due to her prior knowledge of the Child Welfare System and this Agency's files in particular.

At the conclusion of these activities, nine files were randomly selected from the list of fifty-two child sexual abuse investigations which had been conducted in the Agency between 1986 and 1988. The file auditing instrument was used to audit these nine existing files. Changes were made to the draft in conjunction with the kinds of problems which had arisen in the preliminary audit and a second draft was submitted for consideration on the fourteenth of March. Between March 14 and March 23, 1990 a further ten files from Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba were randomly selected and audited, using the second draft of the instrument.

As well during this period, a letter was written to additional service providers who most frequently appeared as collaterals on these files. These included Community Mental Health, Probation Services and the R.C.M.P. The letter outlined the intent of the practicum and requested that permission be granted to audit any file in their agency which corresponded with a file in the Child and Family Services office opened during the same time period. In conjunction with the goals of the practicum, the intent at this

point was to develop an additional services auditing instrument to be paired with the original form at the Child and Family Services office which would track the service provided by the other agency. This piece of the practicum in fact never materialized. As discussions ensued about the use of an auditing instrument on Community Mental Health files in particular, it became clear that the relationship of clients with this service organization is almost exclusively a voluntary one, and that consent would have to be received from each and every subject of the file prior to it's being audited. As a consequence of this, a decision was made in conjunction with the practicum advisor not to pursue this piece of the audit, but to try to establish within the Agency's audit any contacts which may have been made with these additional services, and to collect as much information about what their roles were in relation to each file as was possible.

Over the next several weeks further revisions of the instrument were made as a consequence of the auditing of ten more files. At the time of completion of the fourth draft, this student spent one day training a research assistant to use the auditing form on files from the three-year period from 1986 to 88. The process began with the auditing of all of Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba's files and continued with the auditing of all of Child and Family Services of Eastern Manitoba's files for the same time frame. In conjunction with the development of the file audit instrument, the development of the instruction manual began as well. Many of the issues which arose in writing the manual are

addressed in Chapter Four. A copy of the Instruction Manual is included as an appendix to the report.

In total, there were revisions made to the auditing instrument three times. On the fourth draft, the Instrument was used to audit the files from both Agencies. This student audited personally approximately thirty-five files in the development of the instrument.

During the winter and spring of 1990-91 the auditing forms were reviewed by the Child and Family Services Research Group at the Faculty of Social Work and questions were raised as to the total number of cases which had been found for each study year. Then, in March of 1991, the Child Abuse Secretary at the Agency, in reviewing the files which had been before the Abuse Committee, discovered an additional ten files which had not been listed in the original count. A review of them indicated that most of them had been opened as Child Protection and therefore had not shown up as Abuse. These additional files were then audited and forwarded to the University as well. This brought the final total up to sixty-seven.

In March the writing of this report began.

The Process of Refinement of the Instrument

The most obvious thing about child sexual abuse files is that they should tell a story, and the story that they should tell is the story of the Agency's intervention into the lives of a family around a disclosure of child sexual abuse. In considering what

information would most likely be available on the file, this student attempted to take into consideration what activities would combine to form an entire story. Child welfare legislation in the province of Manitoba requires that a number of things occur when a referral of child abuse is made. The first requirement is that upon receiving a referral, the agency will contact the local detachment of the police in order to plan a joint and parallel investigation into the allegation. This holds true as well if the police receive the call initially. There are expectations that in conducting the investigation the child will be interviewed and any other children who may be at risk will as well be interviewed. As well, the agency will be required to obtain a medical on the child or children in order to determine whether or not physical evidence of abuse exists. Police and social workers may interview other persons who may have knowledge of the alleged occurrence in order to establish whether there is corroborating evidence or not. The involvement of the social work staff is directly related to the need to make a decision about whether or not any child is in need of protection in this situation. The standard of proof which is required under the child welfare legislation is the balance of probabilities, and it is using this standard that social workers and supervisors make significant decisions about cases. The role of the police in conducting the investigation is to establish what most likely happened, and to determine if, in fact, what happened was a crime under the Criminal Code of Canada. The standard of proof with which the criminal justice system is working requires

that the case be able to be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Expectations are that if, in fact, there are problems of abuse or other problems in a family, an agency will make every attempt to either provide or refer the family for appropriate treatment. Interventions which typically will occur around child sexual abuse files would include individual counselling, group counselling, and family counselling. Child protection options which occur might include removal of the offender from the home, removal of the child or children from the home, a child protection plan being put in place, or an Order of Supervision with conditions, dependent on the seriousness of the child protection concerns and the worker's assessment as to whether or not the abuse is likely to occur again. In conducting investigations, social workers typically are in contact with people from other systems throughout both the investigation and treatment phases of the file. Typical persons with whom the agency would make contact during an investigative stage would be the school, public health, or the family doctor. During the treatment phases of the file, it would be more typical for agencies to be involved with private counselling services or Community Mental Health. In most investigations, it is assumed that workers and police officers will be providing a joint service to the family for a period of time. Throughout that time, information is expected to flow back and forth between the two services. It can be assumed, therefore, that some of what is happening within the criminal justice side of the investigation should be recorded in some way on the child welfare file. In some

agencies, this might constitute a copy of all statements taken by the police, as well as a letter outlining the final decisions of the police. In other agencies, police will make available only verbal reports and will require that workers come to the detachment to review the file if they in fact, feel they need the information. Due to the confidentiality aspects of providing treatment, one could expect that there would be less information related to progress in treatment, unless in fact, a release of confidential information form has been signed. or the treatment is being provided by the Agency.

Given the story that a child sexual abuse file is expected to tell, some assumptions were made by this student about the kinds of information which should be able to be found fairly reliably on each and every file. In beginning the process of developing the Instrument, this student made a listing of the kinds of things that it was expected should be on the file. This listing included the following: geographic location of the family (i.e. town, quadrant, etc.), name and age of the parents, maiden name of the mother, names and ages of the children, the type of referral, the referral source, the number and nature of past referrals, findings of the social work and police, the kind of abuse and to what extent, over what time-frame the abuse occurred, the persons the worker contacted in the investigative phase, criminal charges, assessments that were completed, family court disposition, the time between the referral being received until the investigation was completed, results of medicals, decisions about placements, how often children

were seen by workers, how often the family was seen by the worker, the role of the abuse worker on the particular file, whether there was a contract in place around treatment, whether there was voluntary or court-ordered involvement with treatment, who was the family referred to, how often were they seen, for how long, and what goals were kept in mind, how did the family terminate, why and when, who in the family got treatment, who didn't, who provided it, was there a treatment plan, did it involve a written contract, did what was planned end up being what was actually provided. Armed with these expectations, this student reviewed the forms which were being used by the Project along with the Agency Intake forms. As well, consideration was given to the knowledge of this student as a supervisor of child abuse files, and typically what experience this student had had in retrieving information from files in the past. The first test of the instrument resulted in several changes. Differences necessarily had to exist between the retrospective file audit instrument and the instrument which the Project would be using on newly opened files. The primary one was the inclusion of a "not recorded" column. Questions such as "was there a custody and/or access battle in progress at the time of the referral?", were added to lend another dimension to the audit. Information on other agency involvement in the investigation, child protection and treatment phases was added to facilitate making connections with other agencies. At the time, as well, it was felt that it might be helpful to indicate information such as which quadrant of the area the case originated from. This was later

removed in an effort to make the form more compatible with the structure of other agencies' areas. As refinement of the Instrument continued an attempt was made to formulate the questionnaire which followed the logical process of an abuse investigation. As well, it was necessary to recognize that on all abuse investigations, a decision is made at some point as to whether or not abuse occurred. It was necessary to be clear about what was alleged and what was actually found to be true. Each time a random selection of files was audited, further changes were made to the form to simplify the data collection exercise and place things in a logical order.

In spite of every effort to streamline the form in a way which would make it relatively easy to collect information from files, it was clear in utilizing the completed form that some data collection would be laborious. Much of this has to do with the nature and size of files, the particular propensity of workers to write in a chronological way or not, and how much information actually is recorded on the file. "Other" columns were put into the form as a part of most listings and if certain things continued to appear in the "other" column reliably, they were then built into the form as a standard option. It should be noted that the format which was developed looked primarily at case characteristics as opposed to worker activities. If information was available on the file, even though it may have appeared in a report from another agency as opposed to being contained in the worker's dictation, it was considered to be a legitimate part of the record. Any attempt at

formulating a questionnaire which tracked worker activity would look substantially different from this particular instrument. This was consistent with the original goals of the instrument in tracking service patterns, not monitoring staff actions.

Along with developing the auditing instrument, work began on the instruction booklet. This student was of the belief that the instruction booklet should be comprehensive, simple to follow, and should explain particular pieces of the form in some detail. While most of the forms seem to be reasonably simplistic in its expectations and requirements, it became apparent after several pre-tests that there were areas where confusion could result. One of these areas had to do with the need for clear definitions of the different kinds of abuse. Consideration was given to placing the definitions on the auditing instrument at the point where the auditor was required to make the decision about the kind of abuse which had occurred. However, in the interest of not lengthening the auditing form any more than it was already, a decision was made to include these definitions only in the instruction manual.

As well, the instruction manual provided clarity around the issue of which sections of the auditing form should be completed on which family members, and how many sections would necessarily need to be completed in order for a full audit to have been done. One comment which must be made about the development of the instruction manual is that in retrospect, it would have been most useful to have completed the manual or at least have had it in draft form in the early stages of development of the instrument. This would have

allowed for testing of the instruction manual as well as the instrument. As it stands, the instruction manual for this auditing instrument has not been as fully tested as this student would have liked it to have been. A worthwhile project for another student might be the refinement of the instruction manual and the testing of it.

This is a summary of the major activities which were undertaken in fulfilling this Practicum. Chapter IV will outline the observations and outcomes of the process of development and application of the form.

CHAPTER FOUR

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

This Chapter will present a summary of what this student observed in conducting this Practicum. The summary will include coverage of four major areas:

- 1) Agency file recording
- 2) The Agency record-management procedures
- 3) Development and Application of the Instrument
- 4) Data Analysis

1. File Recording

In conducting this Practicum, this student had the opportunity to review, for auditing purposes, approximately thirty-five of the Agency's files. As well, this student pulled and reviewed approximately eighty-six files to determine whether they were physical or sexual abuse. A number of observations can be made which support the contentions that have been made in the literature. Unlike some agencies, this Agency has a very specific format for the organization of material on the file. Material is divided into three areas, including the dictation portion which is attached to the original intake facesheet, a report section, and a correspondence section. Along with these, an envelope is attached to the back of the file folder and all legal documents are found in this part of the file. Examples of legal documents would include court orders and certificates of birth, death, marriage, etc. The majority of the files which were reviewed were in reasonably good

condition in terms of all of the information being in the part of the file where it was appropriately supposed to be, although there were a few that were quite unorganized.

Because this was a review of exclusively child abuse files, it is significant to note that the kind of dictation which was typically found on these files was process recording. Process recording is a fairly detailed account of the day-to-day activities of the worker in relation to the client, along with clinical observations which the worker may make along the way. The reason for the use of process recording is that child abuse files always have the potential of being admitted as evidence in family court. It is imperative that workers be able to provide specific dates and times of contacts with families or collaterals on each and every file. The negative side of process recording from an auditor's point of view is that files which are maintained over long periods of time become incredibly unmanageable in terms of the amount of written material which is maintained on them. Several of the files which were reviewed had been bound in volumes and were several inches thick. In a search for very specific information which could be found anywhere in the file, it is extremely difficult for auditors to work their way through this amount of material in a short time. Consequently, the number of average sized files which could be audited in the period of a day, in this student's experience, was generally between five and seven files. The occasional very large file could take almost a day on its own. In addition, workers quite obviously had very different writing

styles. While some workers were inclined to record extremely detailed information, others were inclined to record less. The more information on the file in terms of sheer quantity was not necessarily an indication that the audit would be more successful in terms of retrieving information. Choices about what workers recorded varied from one to the other.

This Agency has a standardized intake facesheet which includes some of the basic information which one would assume that an agency will require when making a first contact with a family. The problem in this Agency is not that a standardized intake facesheet does not exist, but that there are major inconsistencies in how thoroughly these intake facesheets have been filled out. As well, the facesheet is quite basic and asks for a very small amount of information. Kroth (1979) offers a number of explanations for why information that would seem reasonably basic is often not found on child sexual abuse intake forms. Included in this are the atmosphere of crisis in which workers are attempting to obtain the information initially, the number of agencies who are interfacing at intake time, the variety of the intakes related to sexual abuse which exist, problems with regular data processing, the difficulty of dealing with data collection under the pressure of burgeoning caseloads. It would appear from an analysis of files in this Agency that a number of the same problems exist. It is clear that workloads are heavy and workers have limited time in which to be collecting data. At the time of an intake, the worker is often dealing with a family who are extremely upset and in that

atmosphere, it is inappropriate to ask for information about, for example, how many years of education someone might have. Because of the infrequent reviewing of these records, by anyone other than the caseworker and occasionally the supervisor, going back and retrieving this information which is not necessary from a legal or clinical standpoint, has not been a priority.

In this Agency, a problem exists in the Agency's ability to process information that is collected. Under a manual system for collecting and analyzing information on families, managers tend not to utilize information from files in making decisions about the direction of the Agency, because of the obvious problems in aggregating it. What is generally recorded as a result of this is information which front-line service providers see as important.

Examination of this Agency's records also indicated records which appeared to be in transition. While the original uses of social work records cited in the literature were primarily for supervision, it is clear that the records of this Agency have progressed to the point of being utilized for a range of other uses. Some of these would be accountability in terms of compliance with regulations as child abuse standards have become more rigorous over the past few years, clinical information for future workers, information about families and their histories for the benefit of clients who may access files in the future, and case information recorded for utilization in family and criminal court. It is clear that the Agency's records have not progressed to the point that information is being collected and analyzed for purposes of Agency

management. The lack of a computerized system for collecting and analyzing data limits the range of possible uses of information which is collected. It is clear that this is an Agency that is still propelled by a strong value system, a compliance with legislation and regulation, and the best guesses of managers as to the most appropriate direction for the Agency to go. While the emphasis on costs and benefits has impacted on the field of child welfare in Manitoba as it has in other provinces and in the United States, the impact is felt in a less direct manner at this time. Government is only beginning to utilize service contracts in dealing with agencies, and as a consequence detailed information from agencies has not flowed to government until very recently. The lack of a provincial data-collection system has had a significant effect on the entire system, resulting in the actions of funders often being based on best guesses as well.

In addition to these problems, the intake system for the Agency is necessarily a generic one. The size of the Agency does not allow for specialized intake for the most part. As a consequence, the information which is obtained initially is placed on a generic facesheet which does not ask questions specific to child sexual abuse, apart from what the presenting problem is and what has been done about it.

After conducting audits on a number of the Agency files, it must be noted that the information which was obtained for the audit was not necessarily taken from the Intake Facesheet or the recording of social workers. At times the information was obtained

from records which were the property of other agencies and had become a part of the family's record by virtue of that agency forwarding the material to the Agency. There was no attempt made in the auditing form to differentiate between information which was recorded by social workers within the Child and Family Service agency and information which was on the file from other agencies. Having discussed this issue with research assistants who conducted audits in the other agency, it is this student's contention that there are differences between agencies related to the amount of information which is available from Agency workers and from other agency records. It appeared that there was more abundant recording in the files of Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba than was evident in the audit of the other files. For purposes of this particular exercise, where the information came from was of little significance. However, it is something that future auditors should be aware of and may wish to differentiate between.

2. The Agency Filing System

The second area I would like to address is that of the procedures which exist in the Agency for the opening, closing, and transfer of files. Some reference has been made in the chapter describing the setting to the system which is in place in this Agency at this time for opening and tracking files. As has been identified earlier, this manual system includes at the front end, the listing of files in log books. Files always have been re-opened at their original entry point in the log book. As stated previously, this makes it extremely difficult to get listings of cases between certain dates. While this has not been a major issue for the management of the Agency, it did become somewhat of an obstacle in terms of developing a sampling frame for the conducting of the audit. As well, problems related to the proper designation of files under the file category procedures of the Agency develop when workers fail to have open files reclassified as child abuse when an allegation is made. As a consequence, a number of the files which were not found in the initial reviews for the listing, showed up as child protection files later on when the child abuse steno was reviewing her list of cases for the Child Abuse Committee. Had these files been reclassified appropriately, they would have been discovered in the initial review. The possibility exists that there were a few files which were missed in the audit. There would be no solution to this problem apart from pulling every

family service and child abuse file in the south and reviewing it for possible abuse to ensure that it had not been overlooked.

This is a system that is only efficient as the staff who are carrying it out. During times of high stress or restructuring within the Agency, the system is inclined to break down in small ways. Although a computerized system would not resolve this problem, it might have some benefit in terms of automated reminders.

3. Development and Application of the Instrument

This student learned a number of things through her efforts at developing a standardized instrument for the collection of information from the child sexual abuse files. The most significant of those things would be the observation that problems will arise from any lack of clarity about the purpose of the instrument which is being developed. In this situation, the student was following somewhat of a parallel track in developing a form that would do two things. The first of these was to determine what information was reliably available on file, and the second was to collect the information from the files which would provide a picture of what services look like. There were times when these purposes were not both best served by the same questions. The decision to utilize the Project Intake and Registration forms probably fed into this problem in some way, as a good deal of the information which was being collected for the Project was not on the files which were recorded prior to the Project, and when it

was, it appeared in a different order. Assumptions about what would most likely be recorded on files were probably somewhat optimistic. Since there had been no previous study of any of these files or of recording generally in the Agency, there were vast differences between workers and recording styles, and it became difficult to anticipate what would reliably be there. This resulted in the necessity for three pre-tests of the instrument as it was being refined.

Access to files for the pre-test and for the final audit at times proved to be difficult. Because the involvement of the Agency had been relatively recent, many files were still open to staff in the Agency. The practice which is followed in the Agency around allowing workers to remove files from the main office at times presented difficulty in tracking and re-tracking files down in order for them to be audited. As well, it resulted in some inconvenience for workers who had reason to access files quickly.

In the area of application of the auditing instrument, a number of issues arose as well. The first of these was that the information on the auditing instrument is seldom found on the file in the order in which it appears in the instrument. In traditional approaches to file auditing, the best way in which to alleviate this problem is for auditors to be familiar with the filing format with which they are working and familiar with the auditing form, so as not to waste valuable time searching in the wrong place for information. When attempting to employ a standardized audit form, one is vulnerable to this high cost in time efficiency. The second

issue which arose was the need for inference in answering questions which appeared on the form. While the auditing form will ask questions such as "are all of the children presently in the home the children of both parents in the home", the file may not specifically state that this is the case. For example, most intake sheets provide a listing of children in the home. Workers can likely assume or infer that these children are all the children of both parents in the home unless it is stated otherwise on the file. However, in doing so, they may be making an occasional error since some workers may simply choose not to record, or may never find out what the correct information is. The only way in which to deal with the issue of the need for inference with the auditing form was to designate in the instruction manual in what situations it was safe to infer. In situations where it is not probable that you can assume the information to be true if it is not clearly stated, the category of 'not recorded' was designated on the instrument. Another major issue in applying the auditing form was the decision which auditors were at times required to make about what the type of abuse was. For the duration of this audit, there were three basic options available to choose from, as well as an 'other' category. These included intra-familial, extra-familial, and trusted third party. Clear definitions are required for each of these categories, since intra-familial could be considered to include only the nuclear family or could be considered to include anyone who was even remotely related to the child. For purposes of this audit, intra-familial was considered to be nuclear family

only. This presented a problem in terms of designating abuse by people such as uncles who seem to fall inappropriately under the category of trusted third party, since they are not extra-familial. The results of this audit are consistent in that the same definition was used throughout the auditing process. However this student would recommend changes to the auditing form to include three categories, including intra-familial which would include abuse by parents, step-parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, or any other blood or adoptive relative of the child, trusted third party which would include any abuse by a person who is in a position of trust with the child, i.e. foster parents, permanent care-takers who may or may not have guardianship, babysitters, teachers, volunteer leaders, or any other person in a position of trust with the child, and third-party assault which would refer to assault by someone whom the child does not know well and who is not in a position of trust to the child. The changes have been made in the Instrument, marked "Appendix 2-a". Making distinctions about the type of file may still be difficult at times. Auditors were required to pay careful attention to the reason that the file was being opened. For example, a file may be opened on the family of a victim of a third-party assault. This file would be considered a third-party assault file. If subsequently another file was opened on the family of the offender as a consequence of his behavior, but the investigation was to determine whether or not, in fact, his own children were victims of abuse, this file would be an intra-familial file. In

this case, the purpose of opening the file would be to determine whether or not the offenders own children were victims. Another example would be in the situation where a cousin is babysitting a child at the time that the child is assaulted. The file would be considered intra-familial as the primary relationship between the offender and the victim in this situation is intra-familial and not the babysitting or third-party relationship. This situation was as well complicated by a change in the definition of abuse during the Practicum.

Other observations regarding the development and application of the form have been addressed in Chapter Three. However, it must be said, the major problem in applying the auditing instrument is that every situation presents a new angle which the auditor has not faced previously. One could anticipate that this would be an even more major problem in an agency in which the auditing form had not been developed. In those circumstances, auditors will be faced with an even greater number of problems related to decisions which must be consistently thought out and made along the way. One could anticipate also that the categories which are allowed for in the auditing form may not fit with the particular categories used in another agency for file designations.

4. Preliminary Analysis (Reliability of Information Appearing on Files)

Last, but not least, one must comment on the analysis of the information which was collected from the child sexual abuse files.

This is critical to the discussion of whether or not one can use a standardized instrument to audit sexual abuse files. An analysis of thirty-seven cases from the years 1987 and 1988 was conducted with the intent of determining what information was most reliably available on the files, and what focus might be taken in recommending improvements in information collection practices in the Agency. Nineteen of the thirty-seven cases which were analyzed were from the year 1987 and eighteen were from the year 1988. The findings, which indicate what percentage of the time the information was missing, are recorded in the following tables (* - information missing over 30% of the time):

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>NOT RECORDED/ MISSING %</u>
Intake Date	0%
Male D.O.B.	43.2%*
Female D.O.B.	51.4%*
Male Religion	78.4%*
Female Religion	83.8%*
Marital Status	2.7%
Male Education	97.3%*
Female Education	97.3%*
Income	89.2%*
Child Reside in Home Full Time?	0%
Previous Marriages	62.2%*
Both Parents of All Children Home	21.6 - 24.3%
Kids not at home now	56.8 - 62.2%*

Male Employment Status	32.4%*
Female Employment Status	32.4%*
Male Living Arrangements	13.5%
Female Living Arrangements	5.4%
Total Number of Children	0%
Licensed Foster Home	0%
Alleged by Foster Child	2.7%
Refugee	48.6%*
Type of File	0%
Referral Source	0%
Number of Alleged Child Victims	0%
Number of Confirmed Child Victims	5.4%
Number of Alleged Adult Victims	5.4%
Number of Confirmed Adult Victims	5.4%
Alleged Victim Outside Family	8.1%
Confirmed Victim Outside Family	8.1%
Reported to Police	5.4%
Police Investigation	8.1%
Police/Crown Disposition	21.6%
Criminal Court Disposition	67.6%*
Child and Family Services Finding	2.7%
Family Court Disposition	13.5%
Prior Allegations of Abuse	8.1%
Previous Confirmation of Abuse	10.8%
Custody Battle	2.7%
Condition at Time of Molest	35.1%*

Methods in Molest	51.4%*
Methods Maintain Secrecy	59.5%*
Condition Immediately after Disclosure	43.2%*
Condition at Closing	40.5%*
N.O.P. Source of Information	40.5%*
Response of Offender	31.4%*
Victim Background	48.6%*
Relationship to Offender	0%
Previous Investigation or Treatment	2.7%
Age at Onset of Abuse	59.5%*
Duration of Abuse	62.2%*
Number of Incidents	0%
Types of Molest	0%
Source of Information	0%
Child Retraction	0%
Alleged Perpetrator's Age	32.4%*
Alleged Perpetrator's Sex	0%

The analysis of information presents some interesting findings. Typically it would be safe to state that in auditing the files of Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba, there are areas of information which would appear reliably enough to provide one with a picture of the kinds of cases that the Agency is dealing with. Reliability in this case was considered to be acceptable if 70% of the time information was available on the files. Specifically, one can reliably determine the date that the Agency received the referral, the marital status of the male and female

head of the household, whether or not the children reside in the home on a full-time basis, how many children they have, whether or not they are a licenced foster home and whether or not the allegations were made by a foster child of the family. As well, one is able to determine the type of file, who the referral source was and how many alleged and confirmed child and adult victims there were in the family. One can determine how many victims were outside of the family on a little less reliable basis. One can determine whether or not the case was reported to the police and whether or not the police investigated. However, it is more difficult to determine from files what the dispositions or decisions of the police and Crown was related to charges, and even more difficult to determine what the criminal court disposition was if there was one. One can determine quite reliably what the Child and Family Services finding was and less reliably what the family court disposition was if there was family court. One can determine quite reliably whether there were prior allegations of abuse on the file, whether there was a custody battle in place at the time of the file, what the relationship of the victim was to the alleged offender, and whether or not there had been a previous investigation or treatment on that particular victim. Although one cannot determine the age of the child at the onset of the abuse, the methods in the abuse and in maintaining secrecy, or the duration of the abuse from the information provided, it is very possible to determine how many incidents and what kinds of abuse happened, as well as who the best source of information was related

to the abuse. It is possible to determine whether or not the child retracted and what the sex of the perpetrator was. Information which is not available from the file most often included religion of the adult male and female in the home, educational level achieved by the adult male and female in the home, and income level of the adult male and female in the home. This is reasonably congruent with the belief of this student that file recording in this Agency is done largely to serve the needs of workers and supervisors who are responsible for the day-to-day activities on file. Where income was noted, it was noted for one of two reasons. The first was that the family happened to be on Income Security and the worker knew it, and the second was that a homemaker had been placed in the family home in conjunction with the child protection measures taken. In those cases, financial statements are required in order for the homemaker placement to occur.

In conducting a retrospective audit, it is impossible to determine whether the worker did not record information because it was unavailable, or because they felt it was not important (selective deposit). Only interviews with individual workers would assist in making a determination about that. Information related to trends (i.e. abuse investigations in foster homes, retractions by children, etc.) were difficult to get a sense of because the numbers of occurrences were so low. This information would only be valuable in any case from a comparative perspective.

As well, it is clear from this file audit that the kind of information that is valuable from an aggregate point of view is

often scattered throughout the file and must often be deciphered from recording. The particular intake sheet which the Agency utilizes requests only minimal socio-demographic information and does not provide a quick and easy check-off system to gather other information on the file.

This analysis was not able to determine things such as referrals to other agencies and involvement of other agencies, as the data collection of this type of information was not completed using a standardized format. Rather, the format for this information allowed for the worker to list any and all organizations which the family and the worker may have had contact with. This portion of the form could likely be changed to a check system as well, making it possible to analyze and assign a numeric value that could be translated into variables.

It is of benefit here to comment on the recognition in the literature that there will generally be four problems which exist in conducting audits. They include the problem of selective deposit, or the phenomena found not being representative of all existing phenomena. This problem existed in this study to some degree. It has been stated earlier that an additional ten files were discovered by the child abuse steno which did not show up as abuse files in Agency records. It is very possible that there were several files which never were found and which may represent a portion of the total that is different in some way from the files which were audited. The second problem of selective survival, or the possibility of deterioration of some records was less of an

issue in this study. The records which were examined were recent enough so that deterioration was not a problem. The third problem which is cited in the literature is the possibility that erroneous information or changes in the phenomena may have occurred which a researcher having not been present at or during the event may not be aware of. The fourth problem which is cited in the literature is the problem of cost and person-hours. There is no question that the analysis of these files would be an extremely costly method of collecting relevant data. It has been stated before that some files could take up to a day on their own to be audited. The potential usefulness of collecting information from all of the existing files for a certain time period would need to be weighed against the cost of conducting the exercise at all.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall conclusion of this practicum is that some valuable information can be retrieved from existing child sexual abuse files. However, it is apparent that significant gaps exist in the records which agencies maintain, and that certain types of information cannot be reliably collected. This is consistent with the findings of Tader and Wilde (1980) who found the records which they examined to be incomplete and lacking standardization. They noted missing documents, missing detail, and a variance in the completion of records. The question for potential auditors becomes, does the percentage of missing information negate the usefulness of utilizing the standardized auditing instrument altogether.

Any application of a standardized auditing form to determine what information is being recorded on an agency's files can be extremely useful in determining what improvements need to be made in record-keeping. The auditing results presented a well-defined summary of the information which reliably appeared, and the information which seldom appeared. The auditing instrument is incapable of indicating to the auditor why certain information does not appear. It is unclear about whether it is unavailable or workers chose not to record it for some reason. Any agency utilizing this auditing form for this purpose should examine it for questions which may be suitable to their organization which they may wish to add.

Any use of the auditing instrument to develop a picture of what services and clients look like in a particular area, should be treated with some reservation. Of the fifty-six items studied on the form, twenty-four were missing over 30% of the time. This represents almost half of the total items studied. Agencies should be able to anticipate that if their information systems are set up primarily to serve the needs of workers, the information which will be reliably available will relate to worker activities and some client characteristics, and contract between the two. If the information system in the agency has been set up to serve the needs of managers and planners, the information which will likely be available will be much more standardized, and will present a good deal more socio-demographic information than might be expected under other systems. Likewise auditors need to consider who the information that is being retrieved from the files is intended to be useful to. Agencies may wish to examine the form and conduct a pre-audit on ten or more files to determine roughly the type of information that is reliably available. At the conclusion of this exercise, one might consider deleting certain parts of the auditing instrument, to conserve valuable time being spent by auditors searching through vast files that are not likely to contain the information. As well, the pre-audit may give auditors a realistic picture of what information is reliably available, thus providing them with the opportunity to decide whether the audit is worth conducting for the purposes they intend at all. It may well be

that a case study or content-analysis of several randomly selected files may be more useful for certain purposes.

In response to the question "can one use a standardized form to audit child sexual abuse files", it is this student's belief after having gone through this process that the most effective approach to the collection of material from child sexual abuse files would be a standardized auditing form which would allow for the collection of material which appears repetitively on files and would also allow some freedom in collecting information which, while it may not appear reliably enough to be routinely collected, may be of interest to researchers, managers and staff within the facility. A form which was pared down to provide for collection of all the material which appeared over 70% of the time, and allowed for a more general analysis of other material on the file may, in fact, give managers and service providers more information about the direction that the agency should be taking. It may also provide researchers with a picture of the variety of situations which come to be dealt with in a certain area. This may, as well, alleviate the high cost of the audit as less time would be required to search for detail.

The agency in which this audit was conducted and in which this form was developed, clearly had an emphasis on record-keeping that was intended to serve workers and supervisors, in a largely clinical capacity, with some emphasis on evidence of complying with standards and court requirements. Largely, because the system at this Agency is a manual one, information has not been readily

available to upper management to detect or confirm trends in service patterns. As information has been required for the Child Abuse Committees, and subsequently for the Child Abuse Registry, it is becoming increasingly more possible to obtain socio-demographic information from files. However, any proposal to impose a complex information-collection system without the ability to aggregate it in a useful form, would likely be perceived as an unreasonable demand by people who are already under extreme pressure to conform to standards and timelines. Minimum recommendations to this Agency related to improvement of the record-keeping system within the Agency over the short term would include:

- a) supervisors continually monitor the information on intake forms and return them to workers when they are not completely filled out. At the present time, when an intake is received by the Agency intake worker, relatively little information is recorded on the intake sheet at times. This is largely dependent on who makes the referral and how much information they have available at the time. The intake sheet is passed on to a supervisor for possible opening and assignment. In situations where intake sheets have been inadequately completed, but the information is adequate enough to open a file, the problem exists of staff's not going back and fully completing the intake sheet once the file is opened. Extending the role of the intake worker to fully complete the intake sheet would ensure that at least the basic information is recorded on the opening facesheet.

- b) evaluation of record-keeping practices become a standardized part of staff evaluations. (Previously, the Director conducted surprise, random audits. These created more anxiety for staff than a regular evaluation of files would.) At the present time, while administrative strengths and weaknesses are reviewed in regular evaluations of staff, there is no concrete protocol for ensuring that supervisors pull samples of workers' recording and include an evaluation of this in the yearly evaluation. Having this happen would ensure that the importance of file recording would be regularly emphasized and workers could develop concrete goals in this area.

Over the long term, they include:

- a) program areas (i.e. abuse) develop specialized recording and intake formats for their program areas which are useful to workers, compatible with the kind of standards which they are required to meet, and at the same time provide consistent and comprehensive aggregate information which can be analyzed under the present manual system. This would alleviate the problem of general intake facesheets which will not capture information which is particularly relevant to child sexual abuse. In order for this information to be reliably available, workers who typically are involved in the investigation and treatment of child sexual abuse must participate in the development of the specialized intake forms. These forms would then need to be monitored for

completeness the same way that the present intake forms should be more closely monitored.

- b) the Agency continue to push for implementation of the provincial Service Information System. As stated earlier, it is imperative that the Agency somehow acquire the technology by which information can be accumulated in an aggregate form. All of the intake sheets in the world will not be helpful in utilizing information if it cannot be compiled in some meaningful way. If the possibility of the Provincial system is not a reality in the near future, it would seem that the Agency may have to take some preliminary steps on its own. Increased expectations on workers to record information in a more comprehensive fashion will only be meaningful if that information can be translated into useful, statistical and descriptive information.

In the area of Conclusions and Recommendations related to records-management within the Agency, a number of observations have been made about the problems related to the way that files are opened in the log books at the front desk of the Agency. As previously stated, prior to this practicum being conducted, files were re-opened at their original entry point in the book, making it difficult to produce case lists which were opened during a specified period of time. This problem has been alleviated in the Agency due to the struggles which occurred during the Practicum period. As a consequence, all files are now recorded as re-opened on the current page of the book and are referenced to any previous

opening by a "go to" column. As well, a log book has been opened specifically to list child abuse cases for purposes of tracking information for the Child Abuse Committees. It is now possible to obtain listings of all files open between certain dates in every service category, as well as obtaining listings of all child abuse and third-party assault files opened across the Agency during a certain time-frame. The provincial statistics forms which are required to be filled out with non-identifying information on each victim are now completed at the time of presentation to the Child Abuse Committee and submitted to the Support Branch immediately upon presentation at the meeting. Copies of all information forwarded to the Directorate is maintained by the child abuse steno. While the log books at the front desk will only record the dates of opening and closing and the file category of a file, the child abuse log book records the date of opening and closing, along with dates related to presentation to the Committee, name of worker and team to which the file is assigned, dates that statistical information and Registry forms have been submitted. These improvements have all been implemented as a consequence of the work of the child abuse steno and this student in struggling with issues related to the practicum. The Agency may wish to have the program area secretaries begin to maintain separate logs for other program areas as well.

The problems related to files not being opened or transferred or reclassified appropriately can only be dealt with through regular reminders to staff about the importance of accurate

classification, etc. being maintained. These reminders can take place in the form of regular workshops to in-service staff and general memos from supervisors regarding the importance of this activity. In May, 1991, the administrative assistant and the stenos within the Agency provided one workshop on the paper flow within the Agency. Regular workshops on an annual basis related to any changes regarding this would be recommended. While computerization within the Agency would certainly alleviate some of the processing problems related to information flow, problems related to data gathering and data entry will still exist. It is safe to assume that with the implementation of the service information system, a series of workshops will need to be provided to staff regarding the requirements of the system. It would seem reasonable that annual workshops regarding this system would be required as well.

Any agency or program area who wish to conduct an examination of existing records in their own agency or program area, would be advised to consider the following recommendations for proceeding:

- a) Make a clear decision about the purpose of the study and whether an audit can best meet your needs. A great deal has been said in this report about the different purposes for which an agency may choose to conduct an audit. Audits can be conducted to monitor activity, describe clients, track service patterns, et cetera. It cannot be emphasized enough that before proceeding, agencies be absolutely certain that an audit is, in fact, what will accomplish the task which they

have before them in the most effective way and that they are absolutely certain about what the task is.

- b) Consider carefully whether or not you can develop a sampling frame. In this Agency, problems which were largely unforeseen developed when this student was attempting to acquire a listing of the child sexual abuse files for the required years. The agency considering an audit should study their record-keeping procedures to ensure that they are able to develop the listing that they will require.
- c) If you decide to develop your own instrument:
 - i) Tailor the questionnaire as much as possible to follow the regular intake sheet and file recording and organizational practices of the agency or program area to be audited. Differences will exist from one agency to the next in terms of the arrangement of material on files and the type of information which is recorded. The development of the questionnaire should follow the natural practices of the Agency as much as is possible to avoid jumping all over the files to acquire necessary information.
 - ii) Conduct a pre-audit on a number of randomly chosen files in order to determine what percentage of the time information is readily available and whether or not it is worth it to include it on the auditing form. At times, one may be over-optimistic about the percentage of time certain types of information is recorded on files. The

pre-audit will give you a more realistic picture of what is available. Make a decision about what percentage of the time information will need to appear in order for the item to remain in the questionnaire.

- iii) Develop the Instruction Manual in conjunction with the instrument.
- d) One person or a small committee of persons must become familiar with the files, recording practices within the agency, file classification procedures, and opening, closing and transferring practices within the Agency. This committee should remain in place for the duration of the audit for the purpose of making ongoing decisions related to the exceptions which will occur in auditing the files.
- e) Auditors must be chosen to conduct the file audit and must be trained thoroughly in the use of the instrument. They must have access to the file audit instruction booklet at all times. Auditors should not be members of the committee who are set up to oversee the audit. All problems which arise must be referred to the management committee in order to have clear and consistent direction throughout the process.

An overall recommendation to any agency which is considering undertaking either the development of an auditing instrument or the application of an existing instrument to audit their own files, would be that a person be hired on a term position to be responsible for the entire project, or that an existing person on staff be assigned to deal only with that process for the time

period during which it is being done. Frequent interruptions to the process make it difficult to stay on track and result in repetitive corrections having to be made. If one program area chooses to conduct an audit, it would be advisable that the entire staff be in-serviced on what the audit will be about and what its purpose will be. This will provide a supportive context in which to access files and will enable people to cooperate much more fully with the audit. Any audit which is perceived by staff to be a check on their behavior and which does not involve them in any meaningful way may result in distrust on the part of staff related to the entire project. Staff need to be clear about what the purpose of the audit will be, and if in fact, it is to evaluate worker performance in any way, that purpose should be stated up front. As well, managers should be clear about the spirit in which the audit is being conducted and the possible measures which may be taken as a consequence of the outcome of the audit.

The overall goal of this Practicum was to develop skill in the area of file auditing. It is this student's conclusion that, in fact, that goal was met in a fairly substantial way. As indicated in the body of this report, there are a number of things which, if repeating the experiencing, would be done differently. Those changes would be made directly as a result of the learning that has taken place. The question of whether or not the actual data which was collected would be able to provide answers to the questions which were outlined in the initial Practicum proposal remains unanswered for the time being. In order for that question to be

answered, the data which has been collected would need to be analyzed from a different perspective. To date the only analysis has related to whether or not information appeared on the file or not. Any researcher intending to determine the answers to the other questions would need first to decide whether the reliability of the information appearing was strong enough for the study to go ahead at all.

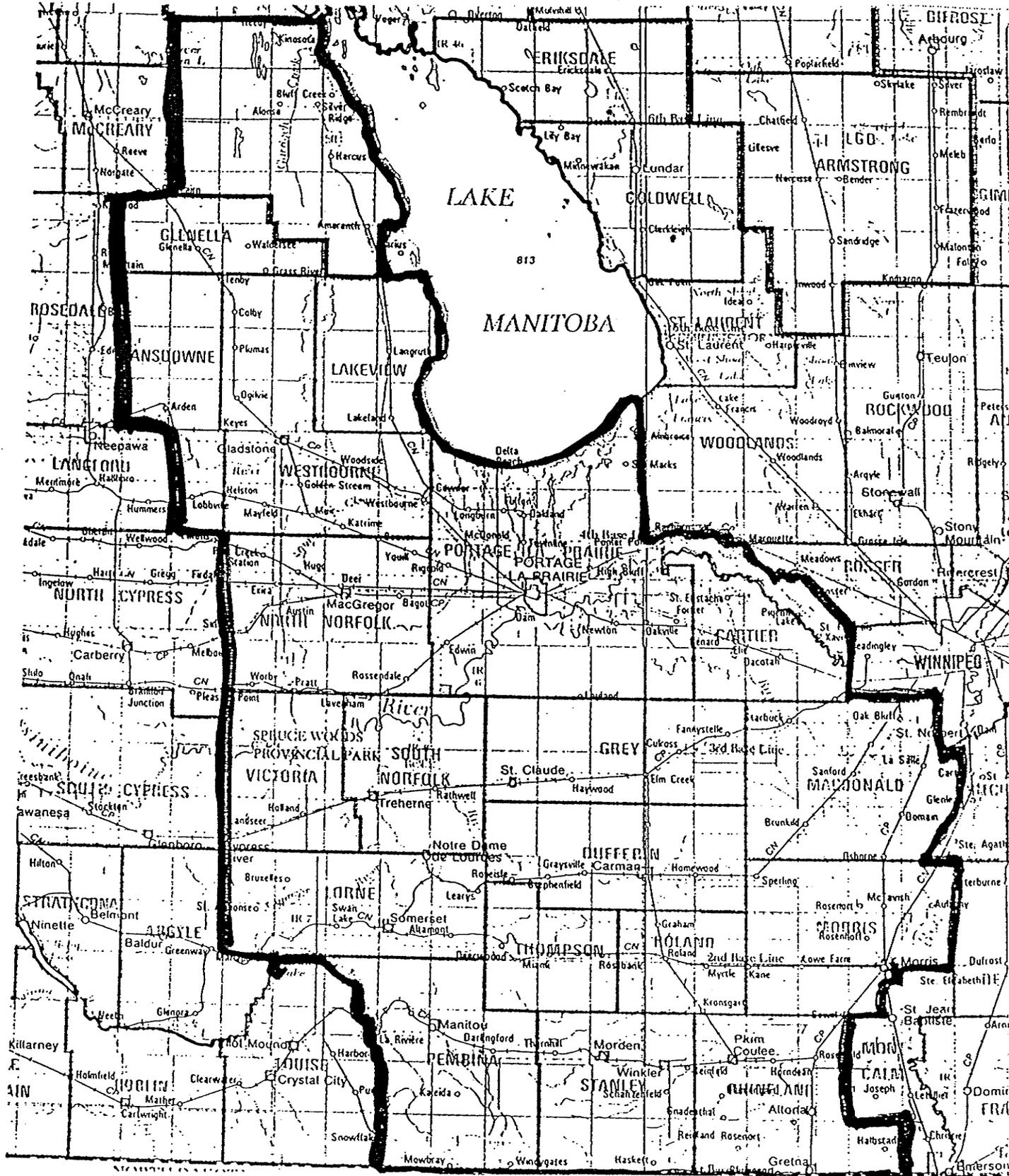
While the goal of developing skill in the area of file auditing has been achieved, it is clear that a recommendation for increased rigor in carrying out the study from a research perspective would be beneficial to the overall goals of any similar project. While the value of the examination of existing records as a methodology in historical research was reasonably well documented in the literature, it was seldom that agency narrative records were cited as a source of this information. Most of the historical information which was cited as being of value was information such as statistics related to birth and death, newspapers articles, sales figures, etc. A more common approach to the analysis of case records has been the use of content analysis or case study. The use of a standardized file audit instrument for these these types of records, as has been indicated, presents some interesting dilemmas and outcomes. There is no question that there is some value in this approach, but also no doubt about its expense. One would clearly need to decide if the gain would out-weigh the cost before proceeding.

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GEOGRAPHICAL AREA SERVED BY CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF CENTRAL MANITOBA

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF CENTRAL MANITOBA

F I L I N G S Y S T E M

1. File Label:

Last Name, First names
Town, Code *, File Number.

Code*

BLUE	}	Part II	Family Service (F.S.)
			Single Parent (S.P.)
			Resource Files: Foster Home (F.H.)
			Homemaker (H.M.)
			Day Care (D.C.)

BUFF	-----	Part III	Child Protection (C.P.)
------	-------	----------	-------------------------

RED	-----		Abuse (A)
-----	-------	--	-----------

BUFF	}	Part IV	Voluntary Placement Agreement (V.P.A)
			Voluntary Surrender of Guardianship (V.S.G.)
			Court Ordered (C.O.) (Temp.)
			(Perm.)

BUFF	}	Part V	Adoption:
			Adopt. 66 Adopt. 69
			Adopt. 67 Adopt. 70
			Adopt. 68 Adopt. 71

- All files of Part II and Resource Files should be in a blue folder and all recording should be on blue paper.
- The attached opening/closing/change form should be stapled to the left inside flap of all files.
- When a blue file changes to any service under other Parts, the opening/closing/change form should be removed from the blue file and stapled to a new file, the appropriate label fixed on the new file and the contents of the blue file transferred to the new file.

Oct.7/86

**MANITOBA RURAL CHILD SEXUAL
ABUSE PROJECT**

**Child Sexual Abuse File
Audit Instrument**

June, 1990

**MANITOBA RURAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PROJECT
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE FILE AUDIT INSTRUMENT**

Family File No: Intake Date:
Day Mo Year Worker's No:

Worker's Name: _____

Person Completing Form: _____

Date Form Completed: _____

Date File Opened: _____

Note: Please indicate if information is not recorded by placing the letters N.R. in the appropriate blanks.

I INFORMATION - SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC (This is to be filled out on each family in whose name a file was opened at the time of referral.)

ADULT MALE

ADULT FEMALE

Surname: _____ (nee: _____)

Given Name(s): _____

Birth Date #: Year _____ Month _____ Day _____ Year _____ Month _____ Day _____
and/or Age _____

Occupation: _____ _____

Residing In or Near: _____

Address: _____

Treaty: Yes No N.R. Yes No N.R.

Religious Affiliation: _____

Active: Yes No

Active: Yes No

Not Recorded

Not Recorded

Single Parent: Yes No
(check one) Not Recorded

(check one) Yes No
Not Recorded

MARITAL STATUS AT TIME OF REFERRAL (check one)

- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Living as Married
- Never Married
- Not Recorded

No Not recorded

EDUCATION (check one)

- | | M | F |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| None | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Grades 1 - 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Grades 5 - 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Grades 9 - 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tec/Voc Training | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| University | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not Recorded | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

TOTAL YEARLY FAMILY INCOME (check one)

- Social Allowance
- 0 - \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$14,999
- \$15,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$49,900
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 and over
- Not Recorded

Does the child (or children) in this family, who is the subject of the referral, reside in the family home on a full time basis? (check one) Yes No Not recorded

If "No", where else does the child live and for what time period?

If one birth or adoptive parent did not reside in the family home at the time of the referral, where did they reside?

IF MARRIED OR LIVING AS MARRIED:

Has either spouse been married before? (check one) Yes No Not recorded

Are both spouses the biological parents of all children living at home now? (check one)

Mother Yes No Not recorded

Father Yes No Not recorded

Does either spouse have children not living at home with them now? (check one)

Mother Yes No Not recorded

Where residing _____

Father Yes No Not recorded

Where residing _____

EMPLOYMENT STATUS (check one)

Employed

	M	F
Full Time Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part Time Seasonal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part Time Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homemaker Full Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Not Seeking Employment

Full Time Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disabled Can't Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Work Available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Unemployed Seeking Work

Not Recorded

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF FAMILY AT TIME OF REFERRAL

(check one).....

	M	F
Immediate Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With Relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boarding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____		

CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME AT TIME OF REFERRAL.....

NAME (include surname if different from family surname)	SEX	BIRTHDATE			GRADE
		Year	Month	Day	
<input type="checkbox"/> 02 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 03 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 04 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 05 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 06 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 07 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 08 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Total Number of Children _____

Was this family a licensed foster home at the time of the referral? Yes No

Was the allegation made by a current or former foster child of this family? Yes No

1. Immigrant/refugee 1 Yes 0 No 9 Not recorded
2. Country of Origin _____
3. Ethnic Identity _____
4. Mother Tongue (first language learned) _____

II INVESTIGATIVE PHASE

TYPE OF FILE.....

1. Intrafamilial
2. Trusted Third Party
3. Third Party Assault
4. Other (specify) _____

REFERRAL SOURCE.....

- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------|----|-----------------------|
| 01 | Victim | 07 | JPD | 13 | Mental Health |
| 02 | Perpetrator | 08 | Adult Prob. | 14 | School |
| 03 | Non-offending partner | 09 | Police | 15 | Church |
| 04 | Sibling | 10 | Criminal Court | 16 | Attorney |
| 05 | Relative | 11 | Physician | 17 | Other (specify) _____ |
| 06 | Friend | 12 | Social Services | | |
| | | | | 99 | Not recorded |

NUMBER OF ALLEGED CHILD VICTIMS IN FAMILY.....

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 = None 9 = Not recorded

NUMBER OF CONFIRMED CHILD VICTIMS IN FAMILY

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 = None 9 = Not recorded

NUMBER OF ALLEGED ADULT VICTIMS IN FAMILY.....

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 = None 9 = Not recorded

NUMBER OF CONFIRMED ADULT VICTIMS IN FAMILY

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 = None 9 = Not recorded

NUMBER OF ALLEGED VICTIMS OUTSIDE FAMILY.....

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 = None 9 - Not recorded

NUMBER OF CONFIRMED VICTIMS OUTSIDE FAMILY.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 = None 9 = Not recorded

POLICE REPORTING.....

- 1. Reported to Police
- 2. Not Reported
- 3. Not Recorded

POLICE INVESTIGATION.....

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Not Recorded

POLICE/CROWN DISPOSITION.....

- 1. No evidence of criminal offence
- 2. Not sufficient evidence to proceed with charges
- 3. Charges laid
- 4. Charges still pending

investigation not complete

Crown awaiting outcome of therapy

- 5. Not recorded
- 6. Other (specify) _____

CRIMINAL COURT DISPOSITION.....

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Jail | 5. Charges stayed |
| 2. Suspended sentence | 6. Not Guilty |
| 3. Mandated treatment | 7. Other (specify) _____ |
| 4. Probation, no mandated treatment | |

8. Not recorded

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE FINDING.....
(circle all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. No evidence of abuse - close file | 6. Non-offending parent/s independent action sufficient to protect child/ children |
| 2. No evidence of abuse - action on other concerns | 7. Apprehension and application to Family Court |
| 3. Insufficient evidence of abuse - no action | 8. Voluntary placement |
| 4. Insufficient evidence of abuse - action taken on other concerns | 9. Voluntary placement with treatment contract |
| 5. Apprehension for investigation only | 10. Other (specify)_____ |
-

FAMILY COURT DISPOSITION.....

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Order of supervision (no treatment conditions) | 4. Temporary order by consent |
| 2. Order of supervision (treatment conditions) | 5. Temporary order by trial |
| 3. Order offender out of home | 6. Permanent order |
| | 7. No finding of child in need of protection |
| | 8. Other (specify)_____ |
-

HAS THERE BEEN PREVIOUS ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN THIS FAMILY?...

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not recorded

HAS THERE BEEN PREVIOUS CONFIRMATION OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN THIS FAMILY?..

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not recorded

WAS THERE A CUSTODY AND/OR ACCESS BATTLE IN PROGRESS AT THE TIME OF THE REFERRAL?.....

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not recorded

INFORMATION ON OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT - INVESTIGATION AND CHILD PROTECTION PHASE

WHAT OTHER AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS WERE CONTACTED DURING THE INVESTIGATIVE STAGE? PLEASE LIST. PLEASE INDICATE WHAT ACTION WAS REQUESTED OF THEM.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

III CONDITIONS PRESENT IN CASE (Complete only if abuse was found to have occurred)

FACTORS PRESENT AT TIME OF MOLEST (choose all that apply).....

- 01 = Mother not living at home
- 02 = Perpetrator left alone with children for long periods
- 03 = Mother out
- 04 = Mother hospitalized
- 05 = Vacation
- 06 = Children visiting offender
- 07 = Physical abuse of children
- 08 = Physical abuse between parents
- 09 = Neglect of children
- 10 = Alcohol factor present
- 11 = Other drug factor present
- 12 = Poverty
- 13 = Domineering father/substitute
- 14 = Domineering mother/substitute
- 15 = Non attending parent deceased
- 16 = Unknown
- 17 = Other (specify) _____
- 18 = Information not recorded

METHODS IN MOLEST (choose all that apply).....

- 1 = No overt coercion used
- 2 = Physical force
- 3 = Physical threats
- 4 = Bribes
- 5 = Authority position
- 6 = Other coercion (specify) _____
- 7 = Affection/attention
- 8 = Not recorded

METHODS TO MAINTAIN SECRECY (choose all that apply).....

- 01 = No overt coercion used
- 02 = Physical force
- 03 = Physical threats
- 04 = Threats (family breakup)
- 05 = Bribes
- 06 = Threats (affection loss)
- 07 = Authority position
- 08 = Other coercion (specify) _____
- 09 = Family loyalty
- 10 = Not recorded

CONDITIONS IMMEDIATELY AFTER DISCLOSURE (choose all that apply).....

- 1. NOP or parents denied
- 2. NOP or parents believed but took no action
- 3. NOP and children left offender
- 4. NOP acted to remove offender from home
- 5. Not recorded
- 6. Other (specify) _____

CONDITIONS AT TIME CASE WAS CLOSED OR FILE WAS AUDITED (choose all that apply)

- 1. NOP or parents still denying
- 2. NOP or parents still believing but not acting
- 3. NOP or parents acting in support of victim
- 4. Not recorded
- 5. Other (specify) _____

NOP OR PARENTS SOURCE OF INFORMATION.....

- 1. NOP didn't know of molest
- 2. NOP knew of molest from victim prior to investigation
- 3. NOP knew of molest from perpetrator prior to investigation
- 4. NOP knew of molest from others prior to investigation
- 5. Not recorded
- 6. Other (specify) _____

REPONSE OF OFFENDER.....

- 1. Denial
- 2. Acceptance/full
- 3. Acceptance/partial
- 4. Voluntary disengagement
- 5. Forced disengagement
- 6. Attempted suicide
- 7. Suicide
- 8. Not recorded
- 9. Other (specify) _____

IV INFORMATION ON ALLEGED VICTIM

FILE NUMBER: _____

FILLING OUT INFORMATION ON:.....

- 1 = Victim 1
- 2 = Victim 2
- 3 = Victim 3
- 4 = Victim 4
- 5 = Victim 5
- 6 = Victim 6
- 7 = Victim 7

FIRST NAME: _____

BACKGROUND STATUS.....

- 1 = Asian
- 2 = Black
- 3 = Caucasian
- 4 = LAM
- 5 = Native
- 6 = Not recorded

RELATION TO OFFENDER AT TIME OF ALLEGED MOLEST.....

- 01 = Sibling
- 02 = Natural child
- 03 = Adopted child
- 04 = Step child
- 05 = Foster child
- 06 = Grandchild
- 07 = Niece/Nephew
- 08 = Cousin
- 09 = Neighbour
- 10 = Friend
- 11 = Other (specify) _____

12 = Not recorded

HAS THIS CHILD BEEN PREVIOUSLY INVOLVED IN A DISCLOSURE OR TREATMENT FOR SEXUAL ABUSE?.....

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Not recorded

IF, IN THE OPINION OF THE AGENCY, ABUSE OCCURRED:

AGE AT ONSET OF SEXUAL ABUSE.....

DURATION OF MOLESTATION.....

- 01 = One day or less
- 02 = 2-6 days
- 03 = one week to one month
- 04 = 2-3 months
- 05 = 4-6 months
- 06 = 7-9 months
- 07 = 10-11 months
- 08 = 12-24 months
- 09 = 25-36 months
- 10 = 37 months and over
- 11 = Not recorded

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS.....

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| 1 = One | 5 = 16-20 |
| 2 = 2-5 | 6 = 21+ |
| 3 = 6-10 | 7 = Not recorded |
| 4 = 11-15 | |

TYPES OF MOLEST (choose all that apply).....

- | | |
|--|---|
| 01 = Proposition for sex acts | 14 = Fellatio by victim |
| 02 = Use of pornography | 15 = Fellatio by offender |
| 03 = Voyeurism | 16 = Cunnilingus by victim |
| 04 = Exhibitionism | 17 = Cunnilingus by offender |
| 05 = Forced to watch others | 18 = Simulated intercourse |
| 06 = Fondling above waist by victim | 19 = Attempted vaginal penetration |
| 07 = Fondling above waist by offender | 20 = Intercourse |
| 08 = Fondling below waist by victim | 21 = Attempted anal penetration |
| 09 = Fondling below waist by offender | 22 = Anal intercourse |
| 10 = Sexualized kissing | 23 = Bestiality |
| 11 = Digital penetration | 24 = Bizarre or ritualistic sexual acts performed |
| 12 = Manual stimulation of offender's genitals | 25 = Use of foreign objects in/on genitals |
| 13 = Manual stimulation of victim's genitals | 26 = Group abuse |
| | 27 = Other _____ |
| | 28 = Not recorded |
| | 29 = Sexual abuse accompanied by physical abuse |

SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR DURATION, NUMBER, TYPE
(choose most reliable source).....

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 = Perpetrator | 4 = External source, e.g. Police |
| 2 = Non-offending adult | 5 = Counsellor's clinical impression |
| 3 = Victim | 6 = Not recorded |

Did the child retract the disclosure at any point during the investigation?

- Partly Yes No Not Recorded

If so, at what point? _____

V INFORMATION ON ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

FILE NUMBER: _____

FIRST NAME: _____

AGE.....

SEX.....1 = Male.....2 = Female.....

GRADE COMPLETED.....

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 01 = Pre-K | 07 = Fifth | 13 = Eleventh |
| 02 = Kinder | 08 = Sixth | 14 = Twelfth |
| 03 = First | 09 = Seventh | 15 = Some college |
| 04 = Second | 10 = Eighth | 16 = College grad |
| 05 = Third | 11 = Ninth | 17 = Postgrad |
| 06 = Fourth | 12 = Tenth | 18 = Not recorded |

BACKGROUND STATUS.....

- 1 = Asian 2 = Black 3 = Caucasian 4 = LAM 5 = Native 6 = Not recorded

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT TIME OF ALLEGED MOLEST.....

- 1 = Full 2 = Part 3 = Unemployed 4 = Student 5 = Not Recorded

RELATION TO VICTIM AT TIME OF ALLEGED MOLEST.....

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 01 = Aunt/Uncle | 07 = Cousin |
| 02 = Mother | 08 = Neighbour |
| 03 = Father | 09 = Friend |
| 04 = Grandparent | 10 = Other (specify) _____ |
| 05 = Sibling | 11 = Not recorded |
| 06 = Mother's boyfriend/
Common Law | |

History of alcohol/substance abuse. Yes No NR

Was alcohol/substance abuse involved in alleged assault(s)? Yes No NR

History of previous criminal involvement? Yes No NR

Was direct contact made with the alleged perpetrator? Yes No NR

Was the occurrence of the abuse confirmed by the Agency? Yes No NR

VI INFORMATION ON TREATMENT

WAS THERE A TREATMENT PLAN?.....

- 1. No treatment required
- 2. Treatment recommended - client refused
- 3. Verbal treatment agreement only
- 4. Written treatment contract
- 5. Not recorded
- 6. Other (specify)_____

Was the treatment intended to directly address the issue of sexual abuse?

- Yes No Not recorded Not required

PLEASE CHECK THE ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE TREATMENT PLAN, IF THEY ARE RECORDED, AND WHETHER OR NOT THEY WERE COMPLETED.....

<u>Planned</u>	<u>Completed</u>			Not Recorded
	Yes	No	Part	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual treatment - victims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual treatment - siblings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual treatment - offender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual treatment - NOS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual treatment - other:_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Group treatment - victims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Group treatment - offender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Group treatment - NOS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Group treatment - N.V. siblings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Marital dyad treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Offender victim dyad treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other dyad:_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> NOS - victim dyad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Family treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker/parent aid placement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WERE ALL ELEMENTS OF THE TREATMENT PLAN TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY?.....

- Yes No Not recorded

IF NOT, PLEASE LIST ALL AGENCIES TO PROVIDE TREATMENT AND WHAT PORTION OF THE TREATMENT THEY WERE TO PROVIDE.....

	Agency/Service	Treatment
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____

WERE CHILD PROTECTION AGREEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE TREATMENT PLAN?.....

Yes

No

Not recorded

March, 1990

**MANITOBA RURAL CHILD
SEXUAL ABUSE PROJECT**

**Child Sexual Abuse File
Audit Instrument**

INSTRUCTION MANUAL

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE FILE AUDIT INSTRUMENT
INSTRUCTION MANUAL

A. INTRODUCTION

The file audit instrument has been designed to collect information from sexual abuse files which are already in existence. These files may or may not have been designed to collect this specific information at the time that they were opened. The auditing instrument does not follow the specific format of any one particular filing system. Rather it is intended to adapt to whatever system the particular agency conducting the audit utilizes. File recording practices vary widely from one agency to another. Some agency file recording is quite standardized. Other agencies simply utilize numbered file folders in which all material has been placed in no particular order.

Given this, there are a number of steps which need to be taken prior to an auditor attempting to utilize this form in the auditing of a child sexual abuse file.

1. Auditors should become familiar with the filing system which is being utilized by the agency. They should be familiar with the types of intakes which come in, the classification of intakes which the particular agency utilizes and the numbering system which the agency uses to open it's files. If the agency organizes file recording material in the file in a particular way, the auditor should be familiar with the standardized format of the file. Examples of this would include agencies which typically would retain correspondence,

legal documents, dictation or other written material in a particular order in the file. As well agencies may have differing practices around the number of files which potentially could be opened on the same family or on individuals within the family. Prior to conducting the audit, there should be agreement on which files will be included in the audit.

Auditors need to be familiar with the standards within the agency around how files get opened, closed and transferred, and which dates are relevant for the audit.

2. Along with becoming familiar with the files within the agency which are to be audited, auditors also need to become familiar with the kind of information which is being asked for on the auditing form. Auditors should conduct preliminary audits on several files in order to familiarize themselves with both the form and the location of materials on the files. Until an auditor is very familiar with the information being required, they should not indicate the information is not recorded until such time as they have read the entire file. The Instruction Manual will serve as the auditors guide as each file is being completed.

B. BASIC RULES

There are basic rules for applying the auditing instrument which must be followed at all times in order for the instrument to be effective.

1. The instrument is designed to pair one auditing form to each family file. Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the form will be completed only once per file. Part 4 will be completed on each victim in the file, part 5 on each perpetrator directly involved in the particular file (whether or not they are a member of the family file being audited). Part 6 will be completed once for each file. A completed audit for one file will consist of all of these parts for whatever numbers they are required. Exceptions to this will be in the case where there was no finding and the form itself indicates that the auditor is to move on to a new section of the form.

NOTE: There may be agencies who open a separate file on any child who comes into the agency's care. These files may contain the same information or they may contain different information. A decision will need to be made prior to the audit as to whether or not these files will be searched as a part of the family's record. It will be necessary to follow a consistent practice in relation to each case.

2. Do not speculate or assume information on the subjects in the file. If the information should have been recorded but is not recorded, the appropriate response is not recorded or NR.

Where exceptions to this rule apply, they will be noted in the Instruction Manual.

3. For purposes of this auditing form, the family refers to the family who are the subjects of the record and in whose name the file has been opened. If Mr. X and Mrs. Y are residing in a common-law relationship and have two of Mrs. Y's children living with them, and the file is opened on them, the fact that Mr. Y is the birth father is of no consequence to the auditor, other than where specific questions may be asked about parents residing elsewhere.
4. Expect that for every rule there will be a variation. Set up a process by which those issues can be resolved prior to the audit beginning. It is essential that the same person or group of persons be responsible for the decisions about adaptations or variations in applying the Instrument so that consistency of practice is ensured.

C. THE AUDITING INSTRUMENT

Directions for completing the Instrument are provided in the order that items appear in the instrument. Numbering of items appears only where they appear in the instrument.

The following explanations and definitions will apply in completing the instrument:

FAMILY FILE NUMBER: This refers to the number which has been assigned by the Agency to the particular file which is being audited.

INTAKE DATE: This refers to the date on which the referral was received by the agency.

WORKER'S NUMBER: Prior to the audit beginning, each worker whose files are to be audited, should be assigned a number. This number will be indicated in this space.

WORKER'S NAME: Indicate the name of the worker to whom the file was assigned.

PERSON COMPLETING THE FORM: refers to the individual auditor completing the auditing instrument.

DATE THE FORM WAS COMPLETED: refers to the date on which the auditing of that particular file was completed.

DATE THE FILE WAS OPENED: refers to the official date in which the file became an open, active file with the agency. This date may not necessarily correspond with the intake date and work may have taken place prior to the actual file being opened. Practices may vary from agency to agency on this.

I INFORMATION - SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC

Complete the information on both the adult male and the adult female in whose name the file has been opened. If the file is opened in the name of only one parent or caregiver, complete the information on only that parent. If the family is headed by a couple who are in a homosexual relationship, the auditor should change either adult male or adult female to indicate two partners of the same gender.

SURNAME: refers to the last name of each partner in the family.

ADULT FEMALE: nee is to indicate the maiden or birth name of the adult female partner.

GIVEN NAMES: indicate all recorded given names on the file.

BIRTH NAMES AND/OR AGE: indicate whichever is available or both.

OCCUPATION: indicate the normal occupation of the adult male and female, regardless of whether they are employed or not.

RESIDING IN OR NEAR: indicate the town or city which the family lives either in or closest to.

ADDRESS: indicate the mailing address of the partners if available.

TREATY: refers to treaty status under the Indian Affairs Legislation.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION: refers to the church or religious organization which the person affiliates. Indicate NONE if they have no affiliations and N. R. if they are not recorded.

SINGLE PARENT: indicate yes or no dependant on whether the person or persons on whom the file was opened were parenting on their own at the time of the investigation.

MARITAL STATUS AT TIME OF REFERRAL: this section should be filled out either on the couple who are the subject of the file or the individual who is the subject of the file.

EDUCATION: please indicate what level of education each partner has attained. It is important to keep in mind in these types of questions that "M" refers to male and "F" to female, not mother and father.

TOTAL YEARLY FAMILY INCOME: this information is often not easily found on child welfare files. If it is to be accessed, it is generally found in such things as income statement for Family Support Agreements, Parent Aides, Homemakers, etc.

The next section of the auditing instrument may be subject to the need for some inference on the part of the auditor. For example, if it is not stated in the file that the child lives somewhere else for periods of time, the auditor may infer that the child resides in the family home on a full time basis. However, if it is unclear about where the child resides, then not recorded would be the appropriate response. Likewise, if one birth or adoptive parent clearly exists and there is no reference on the file as to where they reside, the appropriate answer would be not recorded.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: please indicate the employment status of the male and female partners who are the subjects of this file.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF FAMILY AT TIME OF REFERRAL: this section is to be completed separately for the male and female who are the subjects of this file. Immediate family refers to the members of the family who are the subjects of the file living together in a dwelling which is rented or owned by themselves. In a situation where the mother was caring for the children alone but both parents were listed as subjects of the file, the female would be considered to be living with immediate family and the male would be listed as living in one of the other situations dependant on what that might be.

CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME AT TIME OF REFERRAL: please list all children who are indicated to be residing in the home at the time of the referral. If a child has a surname which is different from the family surname, please indicate so by placing brackets around the child's surname. For each child, please indicate the sex of the child, the birthdate and/or age of the child and the grade which they are placed in school. Place the letters N.R. in any space where the information is not recorded.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN KNOWN TO THE AGENCY: please indicate here the number of children who are listed on the file regardless of whether they are living at home at the time of the referral.

LISCENCED FOSTER HOME: The next section relates to the status of the home as a licensed foster home. If the home was a licensed foster home, it is most likely that it would be indicated in the body of the file.

BACKGROUND STATUS: The next section of the file requires the auditor to determine whether or not the family are immigrants to the country in which the audit is being conducted, what their country of origin might be and what their ethnic identity may be. Auditors should not speculate on the basis of a family name what their country of origin might be.

II INVESTIGATIVE PHASE

TYPE OF FILE: There are three possible file types which are listed in this particular auditing instrument. They are intrafamilial, Trusted Third Party and Third Party Assault. Auditors will find that the great variety of referral which are received by child protection agencies may make it difficult to categorize files by types. However, these three categories should encompass most of the referrals which agencies receive. For purposes of this auditing instrument, the following definitions will apply:

1. Intrafamilial:

Intrafamilial abuse will include abuse by parents, step-parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings or any other blood or adoptive relative of the child's.

2. Trusted Third Party:

Trusted Third Party will include any abuse by a person who is in a position of trust with the child. (i.e. foster parents, permanent caretakers who may or may not have guardianship, babysitters, teachers, volunteer leaders or any other person who is in a position of trust with the child.)

3. Third Party Assault:

Third Party Assault refers to files which are opened as a consequence of an assault by someone whom the child does not know or who is not in a position of trust to the child.

Making distinctions about the type of file may become difficult at times. Auditors will need to pay careful attention to the reason that the file is being opened. For example, a file may be opened on the family of a victim of third party assault. This file would be considered a third party assault file. If subsequently another file was opened on the family of the offender as a consequence of his behaviour, but the investigation was to determine whether or not in fact his own children were victims of abuse, this file would be intrafamilial file. The purpose of opening the offender's file was to determine whether or not his own children were victims. Another example would be in the case of a cousin who was babysitting a child at the time that the child was assaulted. The file would be considered intrafamilial as the primary relationship between the offender and the victim in this situation is intrafamilial and not the babysitting or third party relationship. If a file is opened on a foster family as a consequence of a disclosure related to the children who are in their care at that time, the file will be considered an intrafamilial file. If a child made a disclosure upon leaving a foster home, while they were in the care of either new foster parents or their own parents, the file on the alleged offending foster home in this situation would be considered to be trusted third party.

REFERRAL SOURCE: Please circle the individual or organization who made the referral to the agency in relation to the particular file which is being audited.

The next section of the auditing instrument relates to the **Number of Alleged and Confirmed Victims** inside and outside the family.

Adult victims in this section refer to individuals who were adults at the time that the referral was made to the agency. If they have become adults since that time, they should be considered children for purposes of the audit.

"Confirmed" in this section refers to the opinion of the agency about whether or not abuse occurred.

The investigation of a child abuse report most likely involved both a criminal and a child protection investigation. In this next section, please indicate the findings, if any, of the police and criminal court process. Under Child and Family Service finding, please circle all which apply. As well, indicate any clarification under other. Under family court disposition, indicate the disposition of family court if there was a proceeding. If no proceeding occurred, please indicate under "other" that there was no proceeding. In the next section, the auditor may assume that there have been no previous allegations of sexual abuse in the family if no record of such exists on the Agency files. Although there may have been investigations in other agencies, it is most likely

that that information would have been obtained by the worker conducting the initial investigation within this Agency.

INFORMATION ON OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT, INVESTIGATION AND CHILD PROTECTION PHASE: This section of the auditing instrument is intended to collect information about what other agencies were contacted or made contact with the Agency for purposes of completing the investigation or setting up child protection plans. Please list them in the order in which they were contacted in the file, and indicate what action was requested of them. For instance, the initial agency which is contacted on most sexual abuse files is the R.C.M.P. or local police detachment. Typically, the action which is requested of them is to participate in conducting a criminal investigation into the allegations. An example of an organization which might be involved in providing child protection work on the file would be situations such as Public Health being asked to provide regular checks on an infant in a home.

III CONDITIONS PRESENT IN CASE

It is important to note that this section is to be completed only if abuse was found to have occurred. It is not necessary to indicate here what information the referral source relayed about the abuse, as the accuracy of that information can only be determined upon completion of the investigation.

Factors Present at Time of Molest - Choose all factors that were present at the time the abuse occurred. It may be necessary here for the auditor to make inference about such factors as, for example, domineering father, from the information which is provided by the worker on the file. It is very possible that the worker may describe a situation such as this, without making reference to the father as being domineering.

Methods in Molest - Please indicate here all of the methods which were used in order to obtain the child's participation in the abuse.

Methods to Maintain Secrecy - This section refers to any methods which the offender may have used in order to maintain secrecy over the long term.

Conditions Immediately After Disclosure - Please indicate what the reaction of the non-offending parent or parents was immediately after learning about the child's abuse.

Conditions at Time Case was Closed or File was Audited - Please indicate in this section whether or not there had been any change from the response of the parent or parents immediately after disclosure.

Non-Offending Parent or Parents' Source of Information - Please indicate here how the non-offending parent or parents came to be informed of the occurrence of the abuse.

Response of offender - Please check all responses which apply.

IV INFORMATION ON ALLEGED VICTIM

This section must be filled out on each victim who is listed in the file as the subject of an investigation.

File Number - This file number refers to the same family file number which is listed on page 1 of the Child Sexual Abuse File Audit Instrument. Since this section of the form is to be filled out separately on each victim, this file number will enable the forms to be paired with the original file audit instrument in the event that these sections become separated from each other.

Filling Out Information On - Please indicate which victim this information applies to.

First Name - Please indicate the first name of the victim on whom you are presently filling out information.

Background Status - Please indicate the background status of the victim if it is recorded on the file. LAM refers to "Latin American Mennonite".

Relation to Offender at the Time of the Alleged Molest - Please indicate in the next section if this child has been previously involved in a disclosure or treatment of sexual abuse. If no reference is made to this occurrence in the file, auditors may assume that the child has not been involved in a disclosure or treatment.

THE NEXT PART OF THIS SECTION IS TO BE FILLED OUT ONLY IF, IN THE OPINION OF THE AGENCY, ABUSE OCCURRED.

Age at Onset of Sexual Abuse - Refers to the age which the child was when the first occurrence of abuse happened.

Duration of Molestation - Refers to the period of time over which the child was abused.

Number of Incidents - Refers to the approximate number of times which a child was abused.

Types of Molest - Refers to all of the possible ways in which a child may have been abused by the offender. Please indicate all which apply.

Source of Information for Duration, Number, Type - Refers to the party from whom the information about types of molest was most reliably obtained. The next question relates to whether or not the child retracted the disclosure at any point during the investigation. A retraction on the part of a child would not necessarily indicate that the abuse had not occurred. Auditors in gathering the data from the completed forms might, for instance, assume that if the percentage of retractions was extremely high, that more sensitive ways of conducting investigations needed to be implemented within the Agency.

V INFORMATION ON ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

Please complete a separate section on each perpetrator who is investigated in this file whether or not the Agency found that abuse occurred.

File Number - Refers to the original family file number which is listed on page 1 of the Abuse File Audit Instrument. It is the number assigned by the Agency to track the file.

First Name - Please indicate the first name of the alleged perpetrator on whom this section of the form is being completed.

Age - Refers to the age of the alleged perpetrator at the time of the alleged abuse.

Sex - Please indicate male or female.

Grade Completed - If recorded, please indicate which grade the alleged perpetrator completed in school.

Background Status - Refers to the background of this alleged perpetrator.

Employment Status at the time of the Alleged Molest - Please indicate what the status of the alleged perpetrator's employment was at the time that the abuse is alleged to have happened.

Relation to Victim at the Time of the Alleged Molest - Please indicate here what the perpetrator's relationship to the victim was at the time that the abuse occurred.

The next section is a series of questions involving the perpetrator. Please indicate yes, no, or not recorded in reference to each of these questions.

VI INFORMATION ON TREATMENT

Was There a Treatment Plan? - Please indicate which of these responses is most accurate according to the file recording. If no indication is given that any treatment was discussed or occurred, please indicate "not recorded".

Was the Treatment Intended to Directly Address the Issue of Sexual Abuse? - Please indicate here the appropriate answer to this question. The question is intended to capture other activities which may have occurred on the file, even though there may not have been a finding of abuse. Examples of that might be a finding that there were serious marital problems which were leading to the child's presenting as extremely needy. A response to that may have been to provide marital counselling. The Agency may have determined that although no abuse occurred, there were very real issues related to child protection. A response to that may have been the intervention of providing a parenting program to both parents.

ELEMENTS: Please indicate the elements which were included in the treatment plan if they are recorded, and whether or not they were completed.

Were all elements of the Treatment Plan to be Provided by the Child Protection Agency? - Please indicate whether or not the child protection agency planned to be responsible for all elements of the treatment plan.

The final section provides an opportunity to list all of the agencies that were to provide treatment on the file and to indicate what portion of the treatment they were to provide.

For example, if Community Mental Health was in agreement to provide the marital counselling on the file, that should be indicated in this section.

Were Child Protection Agreements Included in the Treatment Plan? - In some agencies, the child protection and treatment aspects of a file are included in a written agreement. In others, the child protection and treatment plan are separated from each other. Please indicate here what the situation is on this file.

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the file audit on a particular family, the auditor should staple together the sections of the file in the numbers which they have been completed and are required. All of these sections together will form the completed audit on this file.