



YWCA
C A N A D A

A TURNING POINT
FOR WOMEN

UN POINT TOURNANT
POUR LES FEMMES

**Building Service Capacity:
Supporting Access to Justice for Aboriginal Women Dealing with Violence**

Legal Information Workshop Exercise

FACT SCENARIO - FAIA EXERCISE

Mary and John got together in high school in Iqaluit in grade 9, having grown up together. They had their first child when Mary was in grade 11 but they both finished high school. They were able to look after the child with the support of Mary's mother.

In grade 12, there was a tragedy in John's family. John's youngest brother, who he loved very much, committed suicide. Other members of John's extended family had suffered violent deaths and John had worked through his grief, but this time John couldn't cope. He started to binge drink and became violent and abusive in the home.

When drunk, he would shout and scream that Mary was a bad mother and wife. He would repeatedly threaten to kill himself and their son.

He used his income support money on alcohol. When Mary would confront him, he would yell and scream and threaten her. If she didn't relent, he would push, shove and even hit her. One time he pushed her against the wall with his hands around her neck. Another time he did the same thing but punched a hole in the wall next to her head. At other times he would rip her clothes or break dishes or furniture. Once he grabbed his loaded hunting rifle and waved it at Mary.

All of this often occurred in front of the child.

On these occasions, Mary would usually leave the home with her son and stay with her sister. Other times, John would take off in a huff and return days later.

After John had sobered up, he was always remorseful. He would tell Mary how much he loved her and their son and how he didn't want to hurt them. He and Mary would talk about his need to get help.

John's on a waiting list to be assessed for counseling. In the meantime, the drinking and violence, which was happening about once a month, is becoming more frequent.

Last Friday night, Mary was working late and John was looking after their son. John called her at work and Mary could tell he had been drinking. He was shouting



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incoherently and she could hear things breaking in the background. Mary left work in a rush and found the kitchen in a shambles. Dishes were everywhere and her son was hiding in the corner in tears.

John demanded money from Mary. She refused. John went to lunge at her, but Mary grabbed her son and made it to the door. As she was leaving, John threatened that if she didn't hand over the baby bonus, he would burn the house down.

Mary was terrified that John would not be able to control his anger and grief and might carry through on the threat or otherwise come after her and the child.

She decided to apply for an EPO. She could have gone to the police, but decided not to because what she really wants is for John to stay away from her when he's dangerous to her and her son and for him to get the help he needs. Mary also thinks it would be a good idea if John's gun were taken away from him until he is in better health.