

**An Analysis and Assessment of an Informal Conflict Management Program in a  
Large Organizational System**

**By**

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**B.A., University of Alberta, 2001**

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**We accept this Major Research Project as conforming  
to the required standard.**

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**Dedication**

For Alexander and Jackson who are the inspiration for all of my achievements.

### **Abstract**

Conflict in the workplace impacts all organizations at some level, whether the conflict is clearly defined and measured in terms of its financial implications or whether the conflict exists in merely a sense that “something is just not working” within the organizational structure. In 1995, the concept of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) was introduced at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) nationally in response to an increasing number of employee relations grievances. This ADR program has evolved over time; however the goal of building capacity for conflict and improving management/employee relations, remains the central aim. This program evaluation examines the effectiveness of the Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP) currently in reaching its stated goals. The research findings suggest that although the services appear to be in line with the intended goals of the program regionally, there are elements at different levels within the organizational influencing the direction and effectiveness of the program. The study will conclude by discussing the extent to which the tenants of ADR, as an integrated philosophy, has been achieved at “K” Division (Edmonton, Alberta).

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## **Chapter 1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AT THE RCMP**

Conflict in the workplace impacts all organizations at some level whether the conflict is clearly defined and measured in terms of its financial implications or whether the conflict exists in merely a sense that “something is just not working” within the organizational system. Understanding of the organization and how it deals with conflict in all its complexity is needed before programs aimed at addressing disputes can be designed and effectively implemented into an organizational system. Formal grievance processes exist in many organizations to address disputes. These formal processes often involve lengthy proceedings of filing grievances, hearings and may ultimately involve litigation and sentencing in the Criminal Justice System. The need for alternative methods to address and resolve issues within organizations in a timely, cost effective and non-adversarial manner has been recognized by organizations, researchers and conflict practitioners for several decades. The emergence of informal processes to resolve conflicts, often called Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programs provide a means of addressing and settling various types of organizational disputes by utilizing methods such as mediation, group needs assessments, coaching, communication training and interest based negotiation rather than using formal adjudication such as court litigation and rights based adversarial proceedings.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is one such organization that recognized a need for an alternative to their formal grievance process. The process for filing grievances, which had been operating since it was established in 1975, (Stokke,

personal communication, 2010) was under review in 1976, along with the internal discipline and public complaints procedures. In their final report, the review commission noted that the enthusiasm with which members were investigated for minor breaches of orders and regulations had created an environment of resentment and bitterness throughout the organization (Marin Report, 1976). The review board suggested that dialogue between supervisors and subordinates would be more effective in alleviating issues rather than the current method of applying discipline. However, no further follow up or recommendations were made in this regard at that time.

In 1989, Community Based Policing (CBP) as a philosophy and new way of doing business was introduced to the RCMP. This approach called for partnering with communities, collaborative problem solving, empowerment and teamwork with external clients (Stokke, personal communication, 2010). This philosophy was later suggested as a strategy for human resource management internally by Deputy Commissioner Murray, (Pony Express, May 1992, p. 17). In the years 1993 – 1995 significant reductions in RCMP personal, especially middle management, and massive budget cuts across the entire Federal civil service increased internal tension and resulted in change fatigue. A new promotion system in this period resulted in a spike in grievances being filed (Stokke, personal communication, 2010).

In 1995, the concept of ADR was introduced by the co-chair of an External Review Committee of the RCMP in Ottawa in response to increasing numbers of grievances (Stokke, personal communication, 2010). At this time, ADR services were intended to address: 1) grievances 2) discipline 3) performance 4) medical discharge



5) demotion 6) other conflict situations affecting Regular Members (RM) and Civilian Members (CM). This was a standalone project that was piloted at Head Quarters (HQ), E Division and H Division (Stokke, personal communication, 2010).

In 1997, a communication plan for ADR programs nationally was implemented with an emphasis on the processes being “fast, friendly and flexible as well as informal and confidential” (Ethics Advisor, 1996). ADR services offered to employees were to include: 1) mediation, 2) negotiation and 3) arbitration. ADR programs were developed regionally in an effort to reduce top heavy management and to increase the likelihood of program implementation and decision making at lower levels. At the end of the 1997 roll out, ADR was considered effectively in place based on anecdotal success stories, select case intervention and support from managers and the Divisional Executive Committee (DEC). At this time, the ADR program was handed over from the external consultants to internal RCMP employees for management of the program (Stokke, personal communication, 2010).

In 2002 the Sunahara Study, commissioned to review the current ADR program, concluded that the ADR program was “largely an ‘add-on’ to existing formal systems – not bringing real change but rather ‘tinkering’ with existing processes, specifically the grievance system” (Sunahara, 2002, p. 100). A call was made for “systemic and unforgiving revamping of the force’s entire dispute resolution regime” (2002, p. 100). ADR was to be regarded as a philosophy, not a policy with the main goal of cultural change within the RCMP organization (Stokke, 2010).

At the regional level, “K” Division in Edmonton, Alberta (includes “G” Division), a pilot project in 2003 brought together a Regular Member (RM) and Public Service Employee (PSE) to design and implement ADR services (Stokke, personal communication, 2010). The mandate of this program was to create an environment conducive to “effective labour-management relations” (Stokke, personal communication, 2010). The services that were offered included interest based negotiation (IBN) training and basic mediation training in an effort to increase the organization’s capacity for conflict and to train internal employees to conduct mediations. Further to this, the services being implemented were to accomplish the following goals and objectives: 1) to provide members with a forum for dealing with conflict in alternative ways; 2) to promote better working relationships through effective communication thus reducing conflict in the workplace and thereby reducing disputes; 3) to build capacity for working with conflict through training; and 4) to seek out leaders and potential conflict practitioners among RMs (Windel, personal communication, 2010). It was recognized that some gaps remained in the services being offered because not all disputes were mediatable due to the complexity of the situations. The pilot project realized many of its goals, however, in 2005, with both practitioner positions becoming vacant, momentum halted.

In 2006, with the hiring of a new RM and PSE to fill the vacant practitioner positions, service delivery resumed and Group Needs Assessments (GNAs) were added to the existing suite of services being offered. GNAs became the core service of the ADR program as the need to address a growing number of complex dispute situations in

RCMP workplaces was identified by practitioners (Stokke, personal communication, 2010). During this time, the program was renamed the Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP). Since 2006, the ICMP has been offering, and anticipates continuing to offer, a suite of services including: 1) intake and referral consultation (involving conflict analysis); 2) conflict coaching; 3) leadership coaching; 4) group needs assessments; 5) facilitated discussion; and 6) mediation. Workshops, often tailored to client needs are also offered on an “as needed” basis (Stokke, personal communication, 2010).

A significant change to the program came in 2008 with the secondment of an Assistant National Director to the ICMP. The difficult work of solidifying the ICMP structure through initiating standardization of the programs, policies and procedures was in progress at the time of this research project. Much of the documentation outlining program procedures and services that were distributed to ICMPs nationally were adapted from program documentation that had been created at “K” Division and were based on “K” Division operations (Stokke, personal communication, 2010).

Shifting ICMP operating procedures from being regionally run programs to nationally implemented programs is currently underway and the effects of this new direction is not yet known. There is a significant need for research regarding what types of changes are occurring at the ICMP at “K” Division and how this will affect the approximate 3,300 employees who may access conflict management services. This number does not include Auxiliary or Term Contract Employees (Stokke, personal communication, 2010). It should be noted that when referring to “K” Division, this also includes the approximate 250 employees in “G” Division. To date, there has been limited

documented analysis of the ICMP services and of the ICMP service outcomes. There appears to be a need for additional research to explore the extent to which the service delivery outcomes achieve the program objectives. At the onset of this research project, the ICMP at “K” Division was most established in terms of resource allocation and longevity of any regional ADR program in the RCMP organization. The researcher therefore focused the study on the “K” Division ICMP and questioned what conditions have existed for “K” Division to continue services over the years (albeit with some gaps in service delivery at times) where other regional programs were either fledging or non-existent. Additionally, what conditions must exist today for the program to continue providing effective and timely services into the future? Through research and analysis, it is anticipated that insight into what factors have contributed to the apparent success of “K” Division’s ICMP program can be found. Moreover, it is hoped that the findings of this analysis of “K” Division might be generalized to benefit ICMPs nationally and consequently dispute management programs in other regions across Canada.

#### Research Focus

Conducting a program analysis and assessment of an Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP) is directly related to the Royal Roads University Master of Arts, Conflict Analysis and Management (MACAM) program academic content. The core content of the MACAM program courses involve critical analysis of case studies where complex systems are analyzed using a variety of theoretical perspectives of conflict and tools for analysis and evaluation. Critical exploration of organizational development theory as well as individual and group behavior in conflict was studied as

part of the MACAM program and is also applicable to this inquiry. This research will draw on specific theoretical concepts regarding program evaluation and design in addition to theory which discusses the implementation of conflict management programs.

The results of the study are intended to provide relevant information that may contribute to the field of conflict management and specifically, organizational conflict management. The topic is applicable to academic study related to conflict management, program development and program evaluation. The inquiry intends to bring about a deeper understanding of the degree to which the delivery of specific conflict management services in organizations can achieve a program's stated objectives and goals. By employing action research, whereby the researcher involves participants in data collection and verification, the outcomes of the evaluative exploration of an existing conflict management program are shared with the organization. Because of this process, the research findings may be used to serve the sponsor organization. Theories related to organizational change also inform this inquiry and carry a high degree of applicability to the study of designing relevant and effective methods of service delivery. These theories will influence the inferences drawn from this research. The evaluation of effective design and implementation of conflict management programs is a topic of significant value to those who are working with organizations in the conflict management field.

It will be necessary to clearly define the identified the goals, objectives and effects of the ICMP at "K" Division to determine the extent to which they are being realized through the program components and service activities. The outcomes of the service delivery, with close attention being paid to unintended consequences of the program

activities and services, will be reflected in the data which will be collected by interviewing participants who have accessed the program services on one or more occasion. This study proposes to answer the following research question: What conditions must exist for the goals and objectives of ICMP “K” Division be effectively implemented? Additionally, in order to fully answer the central research questions, four sub questions were explored:

1. The first sub question: Does the program have clearly defined goals, objectives and activities?
2. The second sub question: Are there plausible linkages established between the activities and the intended goals?
3. The third sub question: Are the activities or interventions implemented consistently and as intended?
4. The fourth sub question: What is the effect of implementation on the program participants?

It is anticipated that the answers to these questions will contribute to increasing the capacity of the ICMP at “K” Division to effectively deliver appropriate services and to move towards achieving the intended goals of the national ICMP program.

## Chapter 2 THEORETICAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

I have divided my discussion of the existing literature related to program analysis and assessment of Informal Conflict Management Programs in organizations into three sections. In the first section, I will provide a brief survey of how perceptions of conflict have informed social conflict and organizational development theory. In the second section, I will discuss existing literature regarding designing effective informal conflict management programs. In the third section, I will review evaluative research theories. Following the discussion of the relevant literature, I will provide a summary of the discussed themes.

### Historical Perspectives of Conflict

The problem of explaining social change was central to nineteenth century sociology. An awareness of the radical social effects caused primarily by the industrial revolution in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century and an appreciation of the gap between European industrial societies and so-called “primitive societies”, provoked currents of thought from early sociologists. Thus, theories of social change, and the inherent conflict associated with change, were primarily centered on the nature of capitalism and industrial development and the apparent lack of social development in societies which had become part of the European colonial empire. Theories of social change, especially those written in the nineteenth century, may be divided into theories of social evolution and theories of social revolution (Abercrombie et al, 1984). In the first, social change was thought to come about through basic stages of development such as military or industrial society whereby society progresses from simple rural agrarian forms

to complex urban industrial ones as asserted by theorists such as A. Comte, H. Spencer and E. Durkheim (Abercrombie et al, 1984). Theories of revolutionary change, particularly deriving from the works of K. Marx emphasized the importance of class conflict, political struggle and imperialism as the principle mechanisms of fundamental structural change. Competing social theories in the industrialization period were many and varied and there are a number of distinctive perspectives regarding legitimate power. The differences in definitions of power are important to this study because they illustrate the contrasting views regarding the conflict that was inherent to the struggle over power. Historically, theorists asserted that power was either repressive or coercive, while other theorists suggest that the struggle over power was productive and enabling and assisted society to evolve.

One school of thought held the belief that the state was the primary legitimate power, and should maintain control over individuals in the early society. Theorists such as Hobbes who argue that individuals are driven by fear and the pursuit of power suggested that without laws and the giving over of individual rights to political powers, civilized society would not exist. To use Hobbes's famous phrase, lives of individuals without hierarchical authority structures would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes as cited in Gordon, 1998). In this view, struggles over power and scarce resources fueled conflict aimed at not only attaining the desired object but was also aimed at neutralizing and eliminating rivals.

For M. Weber, he stated that a person in a social relationship will be able to carry out his or her own will (power) in the pursuit of goals of action, regardless of resistance



(Abercrombie et al, 1984). Key characteristics of his definition include that those that are powerful will exert power over other individuals who are powerless and this may involve resistance and conflict. In this view, power is negative, involving restrictions and deprivations for those subject to domination (Abercrombie et al, 1984). In this view of the phenomenon of conflict, it is a negative force that upsets society and culture and it is seen as pathological rather than the normal state of a healthy social organism (Abercrombie et al, 1984).

In contrast, in Marxist sociology, power is regarded as a structural relationship, existing independently of the wills of individuals and that power exists as a consequence of the class structure of societies (Abercrombie et al, 1984). Key characteristics of this view of power include that power cannot be separated from economic and class relations and that power involves class struggle, and is not simply conflict between individuals. Depending on an individual's relationship with the means of production to produce material, individuals in society could have varying degrees of influence and could hold legitimate power (Abercrombie et al, 1984). In this view, conflict played an important role in society and it was suggested by Engel and Marx that the internal tension caused by political power over lesser classes eventually would erupt and create a classless society of shared power and subsequently, shared resources (Abercrombie et al., 1984). The outcomes of such conflicts were seen as both positive and beneficial to society.

In American sociology, in the mid 1900's, power has not been seen as necessarily involving conflict and coercion. T. Parsons and R. Dahl define power as a positive social capacity for achieving communal ends; power is analogous to money in the economy as a

generalized capacity to secure common goals of a social system (Abercrombie et al, 1984). In this view, power is regarded as widely diffused through society rather than being concentrated in a ruling class.

Also during this period, with the emergence of conflict theory in the 1950's and 1960's sociologists drew on models of social conflict from earlier theorists such as K. Marx and G. Simmel. Conflict theorist, L. Coser, asserted that conflict was "a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources" (Coser, 1956). Coser distinguished realistic from non-realistic conflicts. He indicated that realistic conflict is based in disagreements over the means to an end or over the ends themselves (Coser in Folger et al., 2005). He asserted that realistic conflict interaction focused on substantive issues the participant must address to resolve their underlying incompatibilities. Non realistic conflict, he suggested, "was demonstrated through expressions of aggression in which the sole end is to defeat or hurt the other" (Coser in Folger et al., 2005, p. 8). Coser's theory recognizes there are important contrasts between productive and destructive conflict interactions, although the two may be hard to distinguish from each other at times. He asserted that conflict was usually functional in pluralistic complex societies and that conflict in fact could prevent instability in society. In spite of theories such as Coser's which asserted the functional aspects of conflict in society, the concept of conflict carried with it a negative connotation, particularly in early organizational theory. Conflict was viewed as a destructive force upon organizational structure and was seen as negatively affecting social behavior of people in enterprises and this view largely prevailed in business and organizational literature.

Organizational development literature while recognizing the potential for destructive outcomes of conflict contends that conflict itself is inherently neither positive nor negative. Through the 1960's with the break from the traditional views of labor relations bargaining which included the relational factors affecting the negotiating parties, significant shifts were made regarding methods of negotiation and conflict interaction. (Walton and McKersie 1965, as cited in personal communication, Oster, 2008). Multiple definitions of conflict were presented and can be found in the literature (Mitchell, Kriesberg, Sandole, Ramsbotham, Pondy, personal communication, Oster, 2008). These definitions are differentiated by the point of view of the theorist and form the basis for each inquiry into different aspects of conflict and conflict behavior. Because of this, conflict theory research has branched out into other disciplines and has become a multidisciplinary field of study.

Schmidt (1974) recognized some of the functional and dysfunctional outcomes of conflict within organizations. He suggested that some functional outcomes of conflict include: better ideas, new approaches are sought, long-standing problems are dealt with, tension can stimulate interest and creativity and individual's capacity is tested. He outlines some dysfunctional outcomes of conflict include: some individuals may feel defeated, distance between individuals can be increased, a climate of distrust may develop, and introspective withdrawal rather than cooperation's, resistance to teamwork and people may leave workgroup because of turmoil. Given the possibilities that exist on both sides, it can be seen that effective management of conflict is imperative to diminish negative outcomes and to enhance the positive outcomes. Much research into effective

strategies for management to effectively manage conflict in organizations exists in the literature (Argyris, 1991; Schein, 1996, 1999) and has informed this study.

By the 1980's, Fisher and Ury (1988) developed interest based mediation strategies focusing on the interests of the parties in dispute rather than the dispute itself. Theories of transformative mediation (Bush and Folger, 1994) and narrative mediation (Wade, 2001) were developed, placing emphasis on different aspects of the conflict interaction and of the mediation and negotiation process. What followed these significant contributions to the conflict management field, was that the prevailing literature shifted and suggested that comprehensive assessment and analysis of conflict within organizational settings rather than avoiding, suppressing and containing conflict would enhance the viability of organizations. This focus on the disputing parties and taking a holistic and systemic approach to organizational conflict and change management was a significant departure from previous organizational conflict literature which had been dominated by the model of the "organization as a smooth running machine" and that harmony and cooperation were the optimal state (Weber, as cited in personal communication, Oster, 2008).

In this brief survey of theories of social change, conflict theory and organizational conflict literature it can be seen that conflict has been defined in various ways over different points in history. A variety of factors affect perceptions of conflict and this in turn influences the development of various strategies thought to be effective to address conflict. This theoretical overview is presented with a view to providing a context for how conflict within organizational structures has come to be seen as latently neither good

nor bad, but rather the perspective one holds depends upon the manner by which conflict is individually processed and thus influences individual perceptions. This concept is vital to the tenets behind dispute systems design theory.

### Dispute Systems Design Theory

Often referred to as alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in the literature, conflict management programs provide processes for addressing and settling particular types of organizational disputes in any method other than formal adjudication such as court litigation or administrative proceedings (Costantino & Merchant, 1996). Theories regarding effective design and implementation of conflict resolution programs recognize the inherent challenges involved in both aspects of the process.

The underlying premise of designing interest-based dispute resolution systems recognized by theorists is that appropriate management of conflict is vital to the healthy functioning of an organization. The work of Fisher and Ury (1991) is viewed by many as ground breaking in the field of dispute system design. In their view of conflict resolution, they suggest the efficacy of interest based negotiation as opposed to rights based or power based dispute resolution. While the concept was revolutionary at the time and has been widely practiced in the field, it was found that not all conflict can be resolved through interest based negotiation alone. An understanding of organizational culture, in all its complexity, is an important and essential variable when planning any change to an organization, such as a dispute resolution system (Bendersky, 1996; Mayer, 2000; Schein, 1999). Culture is heavily implicated on all levels of organizational life including a) beliefs about the organization's mission, strategies, goals and identity

b) norms regarding behavior in relationships and how an employee goes about doing her job and c) assumptions about human relationships, human nature, time and space (Schein, 1999).

Bendersky (1996) indicates that practitioners of conflict resolution design programs often miss the complexity of culture in the design. She asserts “[w]ithout understanding what people actually *do* in conflict as part of their culture, the effects of a new conflict resolution program will be seen more in the cost of printing new policy manuals than in changes in people’s conflict behavior” (1998, p. 307). Bendersky indicates that organizational culture is tied to implicit dispute resolution systems and conflict is addressed in an organization according to these informal norms and practices. Whether a new or existing program is used or not depends on how the explicit structure relates to the implicit one. If it aligns, then how an organization says it resolves conflict will translate into how it *does* resolve conflicts (Bendersky, 1998). This concept is particularly relevant to this inquiry because the research will examine whether there exists linkages between the program services and the intended population of the ICMP services at the RCMP and the degree to which employees are utilizing the services. Additionally, the study will seek to identify why the services are or are not being accessed by employees.

While the researcher recognizes the important role, organizational culture plays in the outcomes of a dispute resolution program. This evaluative study will be mindful of the influences of culture on the ICMP at “K” Division, however, an in depth cultural analysis of the organization was beyond the scope of this program evaluability study.

Dispute systems design literature suggests successful outcomes of an effective conflict resolution program would include: 1) the presence of models for improved communication and problem solving techniques in employees both at work and outside of the work environment 2) work groups working together to problem solve that engage people of all backgrounds 3) decrease in disputes with internal and external stakeholders and 4) increase capacity within organization for conflict and tolerance of differences. (Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Mayer 2000).

This overview of dispute systems design literature highlights the complexity of elements involved in designing an effective conflict management program in organizations. These concepts are particularly relevant to this evaluative research study because the researcher, having gained knowledge of what features create effective program design, can readily identify those components of the program under study that are in pursuit of the program's stated goals. This knowledge will inform the inquiry as to the feasibility of conducting the evaluation of the ICMP at "K" Division.

#### Evaluative Research

Program evaluation literature underscores the importance of identifying clear and measurable goals in addition to the anticipated effects and unintended outcomes of the program both negative and positive (Rutman, 1983). The scope of each evaluation of the design and implementation of a program depends on the specific purposes for which the evaluation is being conducted. The purpose of an evaluation could include: 1) for management and administrative purposes 2) to assess the appropriateness of the program changes 3) to identify ways to improve the delivery of intervention and at times 4) to

meet the accountability requirements of funding groups (Rossi, 1985). Program evaluation refers to the use of research methods to measure the effectiveness of operating programs. It appears that there is consensus across the literature, that when conducted on a program that has already been launched, an evaluation can be enhanced by initially conducting an evaluability assessment. “This type of pre-evaluation analysis can help ensure relevant, and technically feasible evaluations that are more likely to meet the purposes for which studies have been launched” (Rutman, 1980, p. 16).

Conducting a thorough evaluability assessment is seen as way to assess the extent to which a program’s effectiveness can be measured. This involves examining both the manner in which a program was implemented as well as the outcomes it produced. Theorists identify factors affecting the evaluability of programs which have been widely discussed in program evaluation literature which include: 1) paying attention to program characteristics 2) clearly specified goals and effects and 3) identification of plausible causal linkages (Rutman, 1983). A comprehensive program evaluation includes an investigation to determine which components of a program meet the above noted conditions and accordingly, those components that are measurable are included in the evaluation. Program components with vague goals and objectives are omitted from the evaluation. The evaluability assessment offers information to program managers about the eliminated programs such as specific shortcomings and aspects of those programs where improvements might be made. Evaluability assessment is a necessary step in program evaluation design and in and of itself offers valuable feedback to the organization. As stated by Carol Weiss:



The sins of the program are often visited on the evaluation. When programs are well-conceptualized and developed, with clearly defined goals and consistent methods of work, the lot of evaluation is relatively easy. But when programs are disorganized beset with disruptions, ineffectively designed, or poorly managed, the evaluation falls heir to the problems of the setting (1973, p. 54).

As such, this study will determine the evaluability of the ICMP at “K” Division as a central component to the research design in order to derive valuable and relevant findings from this research which may be useful for future program evaluation studies.

#### Summary

This literature review has highlighted how theories of social change have evolved and expanded sociology and conflict theory into a multidisciplinary field including organizational theory and conflict management. As the field has evolved, so to have perceptions held regarding conflict as a necessary force in society and later in the nineteenth century, as a necessary and valuable aspect of social structure in industry and enterprise. Conflict in organizations is viewed as inevitable and neither positive nor negative depending on one’s perception and subsequent behaviour when in dispute.

Designing effective dispute management systems are an integral aspect of organizational life. The literature asserts that evaluability assessment is the front-end analysis that enables the researcher to decide the extent to which the program can be effectively evaluated. Therefore, the program components must first meet specific conditions which can be determined through a feasibility study. Without clearly defined

goals, objective and activities, plausible linkages cannot be established between the actual and the intended goals of a conflict management program.

Currently, research that documents clearly defined evaluative methodology, in depth analysis and assessment of the goals, objectives and effects of the Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP) regionally or nationally at the RCMP is limited. The degree to which the ICMP at “K” Division is achieving its intended outcomes may be revealed by an evaluability assessment of its goals, objectives and effects. Therefore evaluation of the numerous factors both internal and external to the ICMP at “K” Division that influence the inputs and outcomes of the program components will be the subject of this study.

### Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Methodological Approach and Design

The study involved a mixed methodology with both qualitative and quantitative components. Because of the incorporation of different methodologies, a variety of data collection techniques could be used such as observation, direct interview, survey, program documentation and focus groups. This in turn increased the breadth and depth of information collected from which a thorough analysis of the program components and the goals and effects of the program services on program participants could be made. The intent of utilizing a variety of methodological approaches was to increase the validity of the findings.

#### *Quantitative Methodology*

The quantitative component of the research included gathering statistical information regarding the employee population, program usage rates, the program services documents such annual reports, program reviews and other relevant material. In order to gain insight into the organization, its history and to provide context for the study, the researcher reviewed information about the RCMP organizational structure, conducted informal interviews with contract and current employees of the RCMP past and present and reviewed task bank documentation regarding various RCMP job duties. This background information was summarized and incorporated into Logic Model I (see Appendix B.1). Logic Model I was used as a reference point for the practitioner interviews and provided the framework within which to organize and analyze the data.

*Logic Model*

One of the common challenges facing organizations is how to measure outcomes of programs. To address this and other questions regarding program effectiveness the logic model was developed in the 1970s by Joseph Wholey. While the concept of a logic model has undergone many refinements and variations have been added to the basic concept over time, this researcher recognized the utility of a logic model to frame the analysis of this study.

An analysis of a program's "logic", involves an evaluability assessment prior to engaging in a comprehensive program evaluation. Wholey asserts that an evaluability assessment is "used to get agreement on realistic measurable program objectives, appropriate program performance indicators, and intended uses of program performance information before full-scale evaluations are begun" (1980, p.13). Building on the work of Wholey, theorist Leonard Rutman asserts that "assessing the extent to which a program is amenable to measurement of its effectiveness" (Rutman, 1980, p. 17) is an essential first step of a successful program evaluation. Rutman provides useful instruction and indicates that certain conditions must be satisfied for successful program evaluations to occur which include: 1) the program (or initiative) has clearly defined goals, objectives and activities 2) there must be plausible linkages between the program components and the intended goals 3) the program components are implemented consistently and as intended 4) the effect of implementation on the program participants is measurable (1980). Rutman's model for a program evaluability process was utilized in the development of this research methodology.

A preliminary logic model, Logic Model I, was developed based on a review of program documentation. The documentation was essential for the preparation of focused and applicable questions used in the practitioner interviews. Following the practitioner interviews, additional information regarding the activities and components of the program was gathered and was incorporated into the logic model. This revised model, Logic Model II (see Appendix B.2), was used for the analysis and conclusions discussion in Chapter 5.

### *Qualitative Methodology*

The qualitative component of the study consisted of an action research design. Action research is an approach that includes “opening the research process to a kind of validation through consensus” (Karlsen, 1991 p. 155) which involves building into the research design, collaboration with the participants being studied. In action research, members of the community being studied actively participate in the research throughout the various stages of the project which include: 1) input into the initial design of the study 2) providing feedback regarding the data collected and findings and finally and 3) being involved at some level with the presentation of the recommendations (Karlsen, 1991). Given that the intention of this research is to provide findings that are useful to stakeholders of the ICMP at “K” Division to manage effective delivery of services, it was crucial that the intended beneficiaries of the study’s findings be actively involved in the research processes. Action research was identified as a way to include individuals involved in the ICMP in the study’s efforts because it allowed for direct input through all

stages of the inquiry and this in turn enhanced the likelihood that the finding would be valid, applicable and meaningful to them.

By having the practitioners take part in evaluation, interpretation and reflection on the data generated through the study, they were able to participate in identifying the strengths and potential weakness in the program components. Additionally, their active participation in the study has the potential to continue after the completion of the inquiry through integrating the recommendations into the program.

#### Research Process

The researcher endeavored to remain neutral as a facilitator, participant and learner over the course of this study. Recognizing that by entering the “K” Division RCMP system, this act in and of itself created an impact and influenced at some level the system (Karlsen, 1991). This researcher endeavored to take appropriate measures to minimize practitioner biases. Measures to minimize the potential for influence or prejudice while engaged in data collection included: 1) reflecting back information before recording interview responses and 2) recording responses verbatim were possible.

The research methodological process consisted of a number of steps. The structure and order are adapted from the direction provided by a number of theorists including Wholey (1980), Rutman (1980) and Rossi (1982). The steps undertaken in this evaluation project include:

- 1) a formal commitment to the idea of doing an evaluation and receive a formal commitment from the sponsoring organization;

- 2) communication of this commitment to program staff and setting parameters and timeframe for the study; and
- 3) decisions on professional leadership, in this case, a contact person within the ICMP at “K” Division of the RCMP.

Once these underlying conditions for the evaluation were established, further specific steps included:

- 1) make up a program component profile;
- 2) select program components for evaluation;
- 3) plan the evaluation through the evaluability assessment;
- 4) implement the evaluation and monitor its progress; and
- 5) report results and develop action plans.

Rutman emphasizes setting the stage for the program evaluation. He asserts that setting the stage “establishes the precondition for planning and carrying out the work in a manner most likely to yield practical information for managerial decisions” (1983, p. 34).

With this in mind, the researcher met with program contacts, attained commitment to proceed and carried out the research in a logical and sequential manner as indicated below:

#### *Phase One*

Phase one of the evaluability study started with a thorough review of program documentation. Five program components (goals) of the program were identified in this process which met the evaluability criteria for evaluation. If it had been found that few of the current program components were linked to services being offered or were

unclearly stated and therefore did not meet the criteria, this in itself would have provided valuable insight into what aspects of the program could be improved.

### *Phase Two*

The second phase, after the documentation review, was a file review in which 5 files from each year between 2003 and 2009 were selected. The information recorded from the 35 randomly selected files was vetted to ensure confidentiality. A research question guide for the file review (see Appendix C), developed for this purpose by the researcher, was used in order to standardize the data collected in the file review and this data was recorded on data collection sheets, also developed for this purpose.

### *Phase Three*

The third phase of data collection involved conducting interviews with past practitioners, current practitioners and program managers. Questions for this interview were developed by adapting questions from the program manager's model (Rutman, 1980) in a semi structured interview. Four practitioners were interviewed in-person using both structured and open ended interview methods. The structured interview followed the practitioner questions (see Appendix A). A copy of the preliminary Logic Model I (see Appendix B.1) was printed and used for the practitioners to refer to during the interview. Where practitioners expanded on their answers, the data was collected and separately categorized. The information gathered in these initial interviews helped to refine and focus the research in terms of eliminating program components from the study that did not meet the evaluability criteria because of not having clearly defined goals and objectives.



*Phase Four*

In the fourth phase of research, the primary population of interest was those members of the RCMP who had accessed the ICMP at “K” Division during the period from 2003 to 2009. Names of individuals identified in this phase of the research were derived from the randomly sampled file reviews. A list of 221 participants who were involved at some level in program services was provided to the RCMP research contact person and a letter of invitation for an interview (see Appendix E) was sent out to 122 of the 221 participants of the program who had been identified. Not all participants identified received invitations because in some cases email addresses were not in the RCMP email distribution data base possibly due to transfers, attrition or were not matched to current email distribution lists because of differences in name spelling. There were 32 responses to the researcher (it was learned later in the focus group that additional responses/inquiries had been sent to the RCMP contact person but the exact number was not recorded) to the 122 invitations; of the 32 recorded responses, 26 participants agreed to be interviewed, and 6 participants declined the request for an interview. Of the 26 participants who responded in the affirmative to an interview request, 15 participants were interviewed in-person and by telephone, where applicable, and the data was recorded using an alpha/numeric identification system to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. Not all of the 26 individuals who responded were available to be interviewed within the timeframe outlined for the interviews to be completed in this stage of the project.

*Phase Five*

The fifth phase of research involved reviewing the data collected from the participant interviews, compiling the information and then categorizing the summarized data using Logic Model II as a framework. The categorized data was then presented to practitioners in a focus group facilitated by the researcher and the Royal Roads University Faculty Advisor. The practitioners' responses to the conclusions drawn from the participant data findings were then incorporated into a combined practitioner/participant set of data. This iterative process of checking and re-checking the data with feedback from the practitioners regarding conclusions drawn from the first set of data served to enhance the validity of the findings and additionally, all stakeholders were included as active participants in both the data collection and interpretation process.

When developing the methodology for this evaluability study, some concerns involving: 1) access to information and 2) whether the quantity of available files would provide a sufficient cross section of services offered by the ICMP were surfaced and addressed. For example, it was thought that there may be ample files that related to one service such as group needs assessments but few files that could be reviewed relating to mediation services. Also, there are some concerns that there may be difficulty in obtaining random samples of files that were representative of the population of employees as a whole because demographic information may not be tracked in the file information in every case. During the course of the file selection, the researcher paid the utmost attention to selecting files that represented a cross section of the participants of the program while at the same time recognizing that those employees who have accessed the

ICMP may not be representative of the employee population of the organization as a whole. It was believed that regardless of the potential challenges with sampling, the information gathered from this research would be useful in terms of identifying the stated and operational goals of the current program and the extent to which the activities (services) were effectively in pursuit the program goals. Additionally, the findings would provide a survey of what services have been offered, to whom and how the service delivery has or has not evolved between 2003 and 2009. The information would also be beneficial because the analysis would provide a sample of outcomes and impressions of the program services from individuals who have accessed the program.

It should be noted that with regards to the sample size and diversity, while the files to be reviewed were randomly selected, to ensure a diverse sample of participants for the file reviews, participation in the interviews was voluntary and therefore respondents may not represent a diverse set of data. It was found that given the number of responses to the invitation for an interview, from the 26 volunteer responses, the 15 interviews that were conducted provided an adequate sample size to be representative of the employee population. Had there been fewer volunteer responses for direct interviews, satisfaction surveys of past participants would have helped to bridge the perceived gap in data collected regarding the impact of the program on participants, however, this step was deemed not necessary for this study.

## Chapter 4 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Through this evaluative inquiry, I have endeavored to provide answers to the following research question and sub questions: What conditions must exist for the goals and objectives of ICMP “K” Division be effectively implemented?

The first sub question: Does the program have clearly defined goals, objectives and activities?

The second sub question: Are there plausible linkages established between the activities and the intended goals?

The third sub question: Are the activities or interventions implemented consistently and as intended?

The fourth sub question: What is the effect of implementation on the program participants?

The research findings will be presented in three sections: 1) file review findings, 2) practitioner interview findings and 3) participant interview findings.

### *Section One: File Review Findings*

The intent of the file selection process was to choose files to be reviewed that might represent a cross section of services that had been provided to a variety of employees who were worked in different levels within the organization. To accomplish this, five files were chosen randomly for each year from between the years of 2003 and 2009, and attention was paid to selecting files that were received from a variety of referral sources, where a variety of services had been offered and/or provided and where

possible, to chose from participants who worked in different areas and at different levels within the organization. The goal of the file review was to get an understanding of what services were being offered over this period and to whom. Files were selected from between the years of 2003 to 2009 because through information gathered by this researcher from unstructured interviews with RCMP employees and from program documentation in preparation for the evaluation, it appeared that in this period the ICMP was most active in providing services to RCMP employees.

The initial methodology outlined a set of six questions (see Appendix C. Research Questions Guide: File Review) that would guide the file review. When the files were opened, it became clear that this guide would require modification because many of the files did not contain details that could provide answers to all the guide questions. Additionally, some of the guide questions, while designed to identify general trends of the services offered by the program, needed to be honed to ask more specific and documentable data. As such, a file review form was designed and used to record data in a manner that could be both, efficient, consistent and organized. The data collected from the file reviews was recorded in the six categories indicated below:

1. *Presenting Problem*

This question explored the types of conflict that was most commonly referred to the ICMP. The file data revealed the following:

Presenting Problem	Number	Percent
Work place issue	21	58%
Management style	5	14%
Harassment	6	17%
Grievance	4	11%

The data collected revealed that the presenting problem in the majority of files were instances of work place conflict. This category included working relationships, interpersonal conflict and group conflict. This data is significant because there is a highly visible formal process in place to address harassment and grievances at the RCMP, however, the data indicates that harassment and grievances do not represent the primary conflict category at “K” Division. Rather, most conflicts at “K” Division, based on these findings, are workplace issues followed by harassment, management style and grievances.

2. *Employee Group*

Of the files reviewed, the primary group of employees who received services was the following:

Employee Group	Number	Percent
Regular Member (RM)	79	59%
Public Servant (PS)	30	22%
Auxiliary Member (AUX)	2	1.5%
Multiparty	9	7 %
Civilian Members (CM)	6	4.5%

The data shows that most services were offered and provided to Regular Members (RM) from various locations and levels within the organization followed by Public Servant (PS) employees. Individual job titles were recorded in many cases, although they were not always apparent from the file documentation. The data indicated that in some cases the workplace dispute was between peers, in some cases between management and employee(s) and in some cases between employee groups such as a RM group and a PS group in the same office. Generally speaking, it was found that services were delivered to employees working at all levels of the organization and in a variety of locations. Similarly, referrals to the program came from employees working in all levels of the RCMP and from among all employee groups in a variety of locations across the division.

### 3 Service(s) Provided

This question explored the types of services that were most commonly offered by the ICMP. The resulting data indicates the following:

Service	Number	Percent
Intake	4	5.5%
Management meeting/consultation	6	8%
Coaching	7	9.5%
Training	6	8%
Training offered	3	4%
Mediation	6	8%
Mediation offered	6	8%
Mediation with external mediator	1	1.3%
Pre mediation	1	1.3%
Conciliation	2	2.5%
Group Needs Assessment (GNA)	12	16%

Service	Number	Percent
Group Needs Assessment (GNA) offered	1	1.3%
GNAR	7	9.5%
Group facilitation	3	4%
Management work shop	2 (22 and 30 participants)	2.5%
Negotiated settlement	6	8%
Interest based training	1	1.3%
Promotional external training	1	1.3%

The data reveals that the primary service provided was Group Needs Assessments (GNA) followed by providing Group Needs Assessment Reports (GNAR) and coaching. In the cases where there was a GNA service provided and no GNAR provided, it is not clear from the file documentation whether the GNAR was provided but not part of the file documentation or whether the GNAR was not part of the service provided to the client group. Management consultation, training and mediation services were also provided in many files. It should be noted that the training category included training provided internally, as well as training information provided to the client regarding courses such as anger management training and various management training which could be accessed by the client from an external training provider. In the latter case, the file documentation did not indicate whether the manager or employee completed the training courses that were recommended to them by the ICMP practitioner.

In regards the types of services delivered and to whom the services were delivered, the data shows that there was a variety of services delivered to various members based on an initial assessment of client needs. In other words, the type of service delivered was not determined by who the individual employee or particular group



was or where they worked within the organization, rather the services offered were determined by the presenting problem and the information gathered from the intake interview. It should be noted that the terminology for the type of services at times changed depending on the timeframe from which files were selected for review. In the files reviewed from 2003 to approximately 2005, the term “initial assessment” was indicated on the file, however, in the later files from approximately 2005 – 2009 the initial assessments were called “intakes”. Both services identified as “initial assessments” and “intakes” were categorized as “intakes” for the purpose of this study.

4. *Outcome/ Evaluation of Services*

This category was designed to evaluate whether the services met the needs of the participants in terms of resolution of the issues. The data revealed:

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Did not proceed with services	2	2%
Agreement reached	8	10.5%
Signed agreement	7	9%
Unsigned agreement	1	1.3%
Issue resolved	12	16%
Issue unresolved	4	6%
Somewhat resolved (mixed)	5	7%
Issue ongoing	6	8%
Status unknown	3	4%
Feedback survey/questionnaire sent (by mail, in person, by email)	9	11%
Feedback survey/questionnaire returned	8	10.5%
Harassment withdrawn	8	10.5%
Grievance withdrawn	3	4%

The data shows that the largest outcome of the services is resolution. In some files, a mediated agreement was signed and in some cases, no agreement was signed. Whether the agreement was followed by the parties after the services had concluded is not known. It is worth noting that tracking whether an issue remained resolved or unresolved following ICMP service was not possible as this data was not recorded on the files. For future consideration by the program, tracking short term and long term outcomes may provide valuable information for program development and measurable outcomes. This will be discussed further in the Chapter 6 Recommendation Section.

In one workplace conflict, one party was interested in proceeding with mediation; however, the other party did not want to proceed. In the same file coaching was provided to both participants and information regarding where the manager could access anger management training was provided to the manager. It is not known whether the manager acted on the training referral and took the course. As a result, multiple services were provided to the participants in this particular file and while the outcome of the service documented on file indicates there was no resolution, it is unknown whether the matter resolved, escalated or remained the same after the ICMP involvement.

In contrast, in several instances, a file indicated that the matter was resolved, however, the reason the conflict resolved appears to be due to one or more individuals being transferred out of the unit. It is unknown in cases where a member was transferred if the dispute followed the member to the next unit or whether the transfer did in fact resolve the matter as this information is not currently tracked.

5. *Invitation for Interview*

Following a review of the file, this researcher determined, based on the file documentation whether a request for interview letter would be sent to the participants. In the majority of cases, it appeared appropriate to invite the participants to participate in the next phase of data collection which was an individual interview. In one case, it did not seem appropriate to request an interview due to the status of the file being unclear. The file documentation indicated that the file was closed and the outcome of the intervention was documented as “harassment case was prevented”. However, in another area of the file documentation form, the outcome of intervention was indicated as not known. Email correspondence between the practitioner and referral source on the file indicated that the conflict was likely ongoing. Because of the potentially ongoing volatility of the file, in this case a participant interview was not requested. In another case, the dispute was resolved after conditions were established for a negotiated transfer and the file was resolved without ADR coordination and therefore an interview was not requested.

6. *Additional Notes*

*i. Timeframe for delivery of services:* While initially, the time to service was not a file review category, it became apparent that this was an important aspect of the file review data collection.

The following information was gathered regarding the total hours of service(s) and the duration of services:

- a) 25 of the 36 files recorded the total time for service, of the 25 recorded service times; the average time spent was 33.65 hours per file.

b) Duration of services was difficult to measure. Of those files that indicated open and closing dates, services ranged from approximately two months to one year. The service response time proved somewhat more difficult to measure because some of the files indicated the file open and close dates only, some indicated both the date of referral and the open and close date. Because of this perceived inconsistency of recording service dates, the time from referral to first service as well as the duration of services cannot be reported reliably.

ii. *Method of service delivery*: The data collected from the file reviews revealed that services were delivered following a referral to the program based on the needs of the clients. There is no indication from the file reporting form or from the content of the files themselves that a specific process or policy was followed for the service delivery regardless of which services were being provided. There was however, some indication that similar steps were followed for conducting GNAs because in most cases, there were reports of individual interviews being scheduled and follow up emails requesting further group meetings to be scheduled. Additionally, in seven of the twelve GNAs, a report was indicated on the file reporting form, this indicates that generally a GNAR with recommendations were part of the service provided. It was noted by a practitioner in the focus group meeting that followed the data collection, that while not all the files indicated a GNAR was produced, it is likely that a report had been generated and provided to the participants, although perhaps not documented on the file. The reason for not keeping a completed GNAR on a file for documentation is not clear at this time.

The service delivery method for mediations would likely have been conducted in the same manner because the ICMP uses interest based mediation which follows a 4 - Stage model.

### ***Section Two: Practitioner Interview Findings***

*QUESTION 1 and 3:* The first question was designed to determine if the goals identified from the review of program documentation and the unstructured interviews with RCMP employees were, from the practitioners' perspective, currently goals of the program. It became apparent while conducting the interviews that Question 1 required some clarification therefore, the question was modified and was asked in two parts: Part One "Are any goals missing from Logic Model I?" and Part Two "Are there any services missing from Logic Model I?" Because of this modification, Question 3 became redundant and was eliminated from the set of interview questions. The participants responded as follows:

*Part One:* The practitioners were in agreement that the goals identified in the preliminary Logic Model I were currently goals of the program, although in some cases the wording was changed to more accurately describe the goal and these changes are indicated below:

- 1) Establish a Framework for Conducting ICM Services
- 2) Provide ICM Services for RCMP Employees
- 3) Provide Training Services for Employees
- 4) Develop Skilled Practitioners
- 5) Research Information and Develop Evaluation Processes

In addition to the five goals stated above the following goals were added:

Goal or Input	Number of Respondents (out of four)	Percentage of consensus
Development of a national program with standardized operating procedures	4	100%
Training and development of the whole organization	1	25%
Develop a national policy, draft policy of program	4	100%
Integration of departments i.e. Harassment, Health Services, Employee Assistance Program	2	50%
Consistently implement policy and procedures	4	100%
Promote awareness of the ICMP by all RCMP employees	1	25%

*Part Two:* This part explored whether any additions and/or amendments to the services listed for each activity (services) category indicated in Logic Model I were required. The data revealed:

Input number; goal	Activity/Service to add, modify or remove	Number (out of four)	Percent of consensus
1. Development of a National Program with Standardized Operational Procedures	Add: develop a strategic direction	4	100%
1. Development of a National Program with Standardized Operational Procedures	Add: decide extent to which program will be offered	1	25%
2. Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	Modify: GNA and GI (Group Interventions) up to 8 people internal, over 8 now being provided by external practitioners	1	25%

<b>Input number; goal</b>	<b>Activity/Service to add, modify or remove</b>	<b>Number (out of four)</b>	<b>Percent of consensus</b>
2. Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	Remove: IBN training for practitioners/volunteers	4	100%
2. Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	Add: Group facilitation/facilitated discussions	2	25%
2. Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	Add: intake services	4	100%
2. Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	Add: conflict coaching	4	100%
2. Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	Add: leadership coaching	4	100%
2. Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	Remove: communication workshops, leadership training, needs assessments	3	75%
3. Training and development of the whole organization	Add: a three phase combined on-line and in-person training for managers	3	75%
3. Training and development of the whole organization	Consider adding: a pilot project regionally to measure if it would be effective nationally	1	25%
3. Training and development of the whole organization	Consider adding: more comprehensive services depending on resources	1	25%
4. Develop skilled practitioners	Add: reflective practice and mentoring	3	75%
4. Develop skilled practitioners	Add: keep up with relevant literature	1	25%
4. Develop skilled practitioners	Add: practice skills outside RCMP	1	25%
4. Develop skilled practitioners	Add: conflict coaching – training for practitioners started 2008	2	50%

<b>Input number; goal</b>	<b>Activity/Service to add, modify or remove</b>	<b>Number (out of four)</b>	<b>Percent of consensus</b>
4. Develop skilled practitioners	Add: standardized orientation/training for professionally trained practitioners, training package includes training in harassment, grievance programs, performance management	1	25%
5. Research/evaluate program information	Add: every file recorded, each with written report	1	25%
5. Research/evaluate program information	Add: evaluation questionnaire for every participant depending on service, Add: evaluation to manager of ICMP then manager sends feedback back to practitioner	1	25%
5. Research/evaluate program information	Add: regional reporting all on-line for every file	1	25%

The data shows the largest number of changes to the program activities was in the additions, modifications and removal of services in the second goal category. It was found that the services offered in 2003 emphasized skill building of employees and volunteer practitioners selected from within the RCMP. During this period, it was reported that a large number of IBN training workshops were delivered to the general employee population. Conflict training, needs assessments (NA) and workshops required a large number of trained practitioners to deliver services. At one time, RM volunteer practitioners received IBN training and were kept on a mediation roster, however, this program ended due to lack of resources to sustain and to continue ongoing training. NAs were modified and became GNAs and new services such as facilitated discussions,



leadership coaching and conflict coaching were added in 2008. It should be noted that the addition of facilitated discussions (informal, casual agreements) should be differentiated from mediation (more formal, record of conversation, reporting to superiors). One reason provided by the practitioners for changes to the services being offered was that the current program's emphasis is on building awareness of conflict rather than skill building across the organization. Additionally, the categorization of leadership coaching should be differentiated from conflict coaching because while conflict coaching is offered to all clients accessing the ICMP at "K" Division, leadership coaching is an informal service based on client needs. The service delivery of the leadership coaching is catered to the individual manager. A manager contacts the ICMP program because of conflict in his/her workplace and is coached on 1) how to address a particular dispute and/or 2) his/her own management style. The revised goals as well as the additions and removal of services from Logic Model I are reflected in Logic Model II (Appendix B.2).

*QUESTION 2.* How does each of the program components operate?

This question allowed practitioners to indicate the steps involved in providing program services. Data collected from the responses was intended to provide insight into whether the activities or interventions are implemented consistently, and as intended (Research sub question three). The five steps involved in providing a service from referral to conclusion were reported as follows:

*Step One: Referral Received*

A referral is received from a variety of sources such as the harassment department, litigation department, and from all levels of management, supervisors and employees from all employee groups (RM, PS, AUX, chaplain, MEAP, SRR). The referral is sent to the program by a variety of means such as by email, phone call or word of mouth or in-person.

*Step Two: Intake Completed*

An intake is completed and a contact form completed. There was some variance in responses with regards to time to service. Some felt that services were started on the date of contact although whether contact was defined as the first phone call or an email returned by a practitioner to acknowledge the referral or whether first contact was defined as actual delivery of services was unclear and may need some further clarification to ensure reliable file documentation going forward. It should be noted that the current file documentation form differentiates the date of referral from the date of first service and this may assist in clarifying the time to service for reporting purposes as this is an important measurable outcome for a program evaluation.

In addition to the discussion about service timeframes, each interviewee was asked about what a reasonable timeframe for the delivery of services would be. There was agreement among practitioners that the timeframe for responding to the referral should be within 48 hours or ASAP and the response to date of service should also be ASAP but the actual time often varies depending on schedules of practitioners and clients. Part of the initial intake includes determining which service would be most

appropriate and then the appropriate management or other parties are informed of the referral to the ICMP.

*Step Three: Service Delivery*

The delivery of service was consistent across the practitioners' responses. They indicated that once there is an agreement regarding the service to be delivered the following process is generally followed:

1. Service delivered, after intake information is collected and the most appropriate service is determined.
2. If no service is accepted by client, may refer out to other external services or external training.
3. Reflection form is completed by practitioner in some but not all cases.

It should be noted that while a reflection form is completed following the delivery of services it was reported that this practice is done informally by "K" Division practitioners and may not be done in other ICMPs nationally.

*Step Four: Follow Up*

The findings indicated that the practitioners follow similar procedures for follow up at the conclusion of services. The findings revealed the following process:

1. Send out (by email, mail) or hand out form personally right after service.
2. Satisfaction survey form goes to manager.
3. 30 day feedback form sent or at 30 -60 days or as determined by the practitioner and client.
4. Ongoing follow up dependent on client and on the issues and timeframe for agreement conditions to be fulfilled. No pre-determined follow up schedule.

*Step Five: Closing the file*

The following procedure is followed by the practitioners for closing a file:

1. Final paperwork completed.
2. May send summary to participants.
3. May send outline of services to reporting line within the RCMP.
4. If GNA – all parties get copy of GNAR or summary.

*QUESTION 4: What does the goal mean to you?*

This question was designed to get a sense of whether the espoused goals of the program were consistent with the actual “goals in use” at the ICMP (Argyris et al., 1974).

All the practitioners responded and the responses to this question are indicated below:

- Develop a policy framework for program.
- Policies effectively integrated, and then processes will be effectively linked, consistent, professional, credible and timely manner.
- National program with clearly stated mandate, mission, vision in line with activities (services).
- Clear communication about the direction of the program to practitioners from management.
- Specific credential criteria and training goals for practitioners.

*QUESTION 5: What would satisfy you that the goal or effect was attained?*

This question was asked to explore what evidence would indicate the goal or effect was attained from the practitioner perspective. The data revealed:

- Have a national program.
- Have a broad understanding by all employees that the ICMP exists and is available for them to utilize.
- Practitioners with the same skills.

- Research would reflect back that goals are being met by the services being offered.
- When the organization is provided the essential training i.e. GNA training for all practitioners.
- When there are national positions formed and contact people to review services, consistency training implementations of policy and procedures.
- Once service is effective, efficient, credible, and professional and workplace wellness achieved.
- When there are less people off duties, in conflict, mad and disgruntled.
- When there is a decrease in harassment and harassment claims.
- When there is an increase in willingness by employees to resolve through ICMP.
- When managers effectively lead.

*QUESTION 6: Are there any competing goals?*

This question was designed to surface any barriers or potential barriers to the effective implementation of the ICMP goals. The data revealed:

When referring to the goals listed in Logic Model I, respondents indicated that there were no competing goals within the ICMP at “K” Division at the functional level. However, when considering competing goals from units/programs/managers outside of the ICMP unit, the findings revealed that there may be some competing goals in the following areas:

- “Empire holding” -when the various programs are integrated under the umbrella of “Employee Wellness” although there should not be competing between programs if mitigated effectively, there may be resistance during the change and integration process.
- The structure of the RCMP creates competition between programs across the organization and within the ICMP i.e. inconsistent resource allocation because of division between the operational goals vs. functional goals of the program(s).

- Looks like national program policy is being sabotaged because too few practitioners to do the work.
- Lack of information sharing from the top down.
- National level wants consistency, regional level left to interpret policy and procedures differently, not consistent application of policy.

*QUESTION 7:* Are the causal linkages plausible (does the program do anything in pursuit of the goals and effects?)

This question was asked to collect data regarding the alignment of services with the stated goals of the program. The data collected could also assist with the exploration of whether the outcomes of the services were intended (or unintended) and what the outcomes were. The findings are reported in the goal categories to assist the identification of linkages between the two elements. The data revealed:

*Goal/Input 1: Establish a Framework for Conducting ICM Services*

The respondents indicated that the development of a national program is in progress and a national policy is currently being drafted. It was recognized by the practitioners that this is in pursuit of the goal of having a national program with a standardized policy and operating framework in addition to a standardized implementation of services which is currently absent from the ICMP.

It was thought that because there is no national program with standardized policy and procedures at this time, the delivery of program services is unable to be evaluated reliably. Once standardization of policies is completed, each service could be evaluated through quality assurance forms which would be in pursuit of the goal of standardization

and integration of the ICMP policy and procedures among practitioners and with other RCMP departments. It was asserted that there is a need to develop reviews and measures to ensure guidelines are being followed.

*Goal/Input 2: Provide ICM Services for RCMP Employees*

It was stated that currently, determining which services are to be provided to RCMP employees in conflict is determined through an intake procedure. There has been some procedural guidelines rolled out to practitioners and additional standardized training is currently being developed for intakes which is in pursuit of the goal of standardized and effective implementation of services. There is a need, as indicated in Goal 1 to evaluate each service delivered possibly through client satisfaction surveys to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of services being offered. Respondents indicated that the services currently being offered by the ICMP appear to be appropriately linked to the goal of providing appropriate ICM services to RCMP employees.

*Goal/Input 3: Provide Training Services for Employees*

It was indicated that in the future, there will be an emphasis on training and development of the whole organization. A three phase training program is currently being developed primarily for management and supervisory level employees and these activities were reported as partially in pursuit of the goal (due to the focus on management employees only). The goal of providing training services to the organization as a whole is partially being implemented through the current practice of having training (conflict coaching for participants during intake and ongoing to the conclusion of the service delivery) embedded into ICMP services. It seems that prior to

2006, the emphasis was on IBN training for the whole organization; however, this goal was only partially realized due to lack of resources in terms of funding and man power to deliver training on a large scale. Based on these responses, it appears that the activities in pursuit of the goal of providing training to the organization are underway, however, services are modified according to available resources.

*Goal/Input 4: Develop Skilled Practitioners*

The goal of developing skilled practitioners is currently being achieved through 1) developing a job description (roles and responsibilities), 2) defining credential criteria for practitioners, 3) initiating a policy whereby qualified practitioners are hired based on professional standards rather than from within the organization 4) drafting policy which outlines standards and qualifications for practitioners and mechanisms for ongoing training.

Some respondents indicated that appreciative inquiry skills, reflective practice, mentoring and skill building are largely absent from the current activities and are an important activity in pursuit of the goal. In some cases, ill-defined practitioner roles are interpreted in different ways by management in particular regions and this creates additional inconsistency in ICMP programs regionally. Practitioner training standards are absent from the activities in “K” Division and in other regions. Some suggestions indicated for establishing and maintaining standardized professional practices are: 1) to develop an internal website accessible for practitioners, 2) to hire professionally trained conflict practitioners, 3) to establish a job description, 4) establish a statement of skills qualifications, 5) consistent hiring process and 6) to hold national meeting for policy roll



out for consistency between regions. The above mentioned activities can be plausibly linked to the goal.

*Goal/Input 5: Research Information and Develop Evaluation Processes*

To effectively research and evaluate the ICMP nationally, few mechanisms are currently in place. It was recognized that the ICMP cannot currently be evaluated nationally because the ICMP is essentially regionally operated. At the regional level, evaluation forms provide some feedback regarding the services being offered at “K” Division to management. The development of a national policy will allow for an evaluative process whereby program evaluation forms can be distributed to RCMP employees and clients of the program. It was suggested that the effectiveness of the program might be evaluated based on referrals to the program. For example, if all the referrals coming to the ICMP were new, an analysis could be done to determine why there were no repeat users of program. It was proposed that if it was found that only new referrals were made to the ICMP this might alert program managers that about potential service delivery issues and whether the activities were producing intended outcomes. Emphasis was made on the need for both practitioners and management to review feedback forms and for management participation in implementing feedback form recommendations. Both these activities are currently absent from the evaluation inputs. To establish and maintain standardized practices, file reviews among peers and management were suggested as being both an evaluative tool as well as a training opportunity. It was suggested that developing a report on program statistics and the progress of files may help to achieve the research and evaluative practice goal. The

implementation of a new data capture technique such as on a flash drive would promote consistency of file data reporting which is currently absent from the activities. Currently, feedback forms and quarterly and annual reporting at “K” Division, program wide conference calls (although infrequent) are the mechanisms in place to achieve the goal.

The respondents agreed that most of the services offered could be linked to the goals of the program. There was agreement over the gaps that had been identified in the evaluation processes that would ensure the policies and procedures were being delivered consistently in every region.

*Goal/Input 6: Build Awareness of the ICMP*

To increase awareness of the ICMP was added to Logic Model I as a goal of the ICMP. An activity currently in pursuit of this goal is setting up a booth to RCMP Head Quarters (HQ) on Conflict Awareness Day and by word of mouth. Some activities suggested that may help to achieve the goal included: 1) develop national workshops such as conflict awareness workshops to be offered in various regions and 2) meeting of managers and practitioners annually to discuss policy and procedures and ICMP promotion strategies. It was asserted that the activities in pursuit of this goal are currently limited.

***Section Three: Participant Interview Findings***

Participants were asked a set of thirteen questions. The findings have been categorized for each question separately in this section.

*QUESTION 1:* What is your impression of the ICMP? Did your impression change after accessing services?

This question was designed to establish what the clients' general impression of the program was prior to accessing the ICMP and whether their impression changed due to their experience with the services. Additionally, it was hoped that the responses could provide insight regarding ICMP awareness and the services it offers.

The data revealed:

Impression	Number	Percent	Change to negative	Change to positive	Stayed the same
Positive	11	48%	3	-	8
Mixed	7	30%	3	2	2
Negative	5	22%	-	1	4

Some participants that were interviewed had multiple experiences with the program, and in some cases reported a positive experience on one occasion and a negative experience from another service on a second occasion. The majority of clients interviewed held a positive impression of the program before and after receiving ICMP services. The data shows that attitudes, whether positive or negative towards the program, generally remained the same after receiving a particular service. Those with mixed feelings about the program reported the largest amount of change in their impression either to negative or to positive. Of those respondents who reported a positive impression, three respondents indicated that they see the ICMP as an important tool for them to seek advice on disputes or for interventions to be performed in their workplaces. Other reasons for positive impressions were because the ICMP attempts to resolve conflict at the lowest level before it escalates. One person indicated that while they

thought the ICMP was important to the RCMP there was not enough awareness about the services it offers. Another stated that the program is valuable but is not credible due to lack of staffing and follow through when recommendations are made. Those that responded negatively generally had a negative experience with the outcome of the program service. Some comments included that the program offers false hope to those involved in the service because they thought things would improve in the workplace but they perceived no improvement after the serve had been delivered. Another individual stated that he/she would like to believe in the program but the ICMP is not supported by senior management and so it lacks enforcement of the recommendations that come out of the service. Overall, the researcher heard that the program was important to the organization; however, it is under resourced.

*QUESTION 2: How did you access the program?*

This question was designed to determine if the program is readily available to clients and to determine the ease by which clients could access the program. The data revealed:

Of the fifteen respondents, five had an experience with the program multiple times, five had an experience with the program on only one occasion and five respondents had two experiences with the program.

Method of Access	Number	Percent
Is a manager that refers others to ICMP	6	28%
Self by phone	2	10%
Practitioners were brought into workplace by manager or coworker	11	52%
Referred to the program by coworker	2	10%

The data shows that most individuals became involved with the ICMP through being asked to participate as part of a larger group when ICMP practitioners came to their workplace. In many cases, individuals had their experience with the ICMP because they worked in a workplace being assessed through a GNA. Based on this data, it is not clear whether the program is easily accessible to potential clients because most of the clients did not access the program directly. One respondent was not certain of how to access the program and indicated he/she would not feel comfortable asking someone in the workplace for the information; two others indicated they could likely find the contact information from someone else in their workplace if needed.

*QUESTION 3: Why do you or why do you not use the ICMP?*

This question was designed to determine in what circumstance employees would access or not access the ICMP services and the reasons for their response. The data revealed:

In a situation where interviewees found themselves in conflict in their workplaces, respondents indicated that they would use the program 65% of the time that they were in conflict.

The following reasons were cited for using the program:

Reason for using ICMP	Number	Percent
Early intervention initiative	6	35%
Ask advise from practitioner	1	6%
Have to do something about conflict	6	35%
Manager informs us about services starting	1	6%
I refer others to the ICMP and I need to use the program for my own disputes so that I “walk the walk”	1	6%
To prevent escalation	2	12%

Respondents indicated that the ICMP offered an important service because it addressed conflicts in the early stages and prevented conflicts from escalating. Others indicated that when workplace conflict occurred, they felt compelled to do something about it but felt somewhat helpless when disputes became entrenched and when many people were negatively affected in the workplace. They indicated a strong sense that something had to be done and that someone coming in from outside the office was an important component in having the dispute effectively addressed and mediated.

In 34% of instances of workplace conflict, interviewees indicated that ICMP services would not be sought to assist in resolving conflict. The following reasons were cited for not using the program:

Reason for not using ICMP	Number	Percent
In a victim/perpetrator situation	1	11%
Conflict can be handled on our own i.e. policy interpretation with manager	1	11%
When conflict is low	1	11%
Had bad experience with ICMP	4	44%
No reason to use it, no conflict	1	11%
May affect me negatively (denied promotions) if I use the program	1	11%

The majority of reasons cited for not using the program were due to a negative experience with the program. The researcher heard a number of cases where the client felt they were let down, they were disappointed, their expectations had not been met or they felt that because they had made an effort to participate in the GNA and give their

feedback, when nothing changed in their workplace as a result of the intervention, they felt the intervention had been “a waste of their time.” In these cases, the respondents indicated that they did not hold a negative opinion of the practitioners or the ICMP per se, indicating that they were pleased with the service delivery, rather, they would not use the program again because of their perception that any recommendation would not be taken seriously and/or acted upon by their managers.

*QUESTION 4: What services do you expect?*

This question was designed to get a sense of whether the stated goals of the ICMP were aligned with clients’ expectations of the program. The data revealed that the following service and services were expected:

<b>Expectation of the ICMP</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
To resolve the conflict	4	19%
Reporting to management and feedback provided to clients	4	19%
Education/training for RCMP employees	5	22%
Advise to managers	4	19%
Provide mandatory conflict training	1	4%
Enforceable recommendations	3	13%
Provide damage control	1	4%

The researcher heard primarily that education and training for both management and employees was an expectation of the ICMP. Some respondents asserted that conflict training should be mandatory for new recruits of the RCMP, in particular for management, and for the total RCMP employee population as a way of preventing workplace conflict within the organization. Other respondents indicated that contacting ICMP practitioners for advice on how to address conflict in their workplace was an

expected program service. This type of leadership coaching was seen as a valuable tool for individuals in supervisory positions who participated in the interview. The coaching provided them with information about how to address workplace conflict and the consultation with practitioners could often assist them with making a decision about whether to refer the matter to the ICMP or, because the conversation with the conflict practitioner had provided them with insight into the conflict, they could manage the conflict on their own.

*QUESTION 5: How do you need to see services provided?*

This question was designed to identify how the expectations of the ICMP services reported in Question 4 could meet the participant’s service delivery expectations. The findings revealed:

<b>Service Delivery Expectations of ICMP</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
From the district level not regional or divisional	2	4%
Personal contact	12	24%
By external person not RM	4	8%
Participants held accountable	9	18%
Timely service	8	16%
Confidentiality	3	6%
Regular reporting to clients about progress on the referral	2	4%
Recommendations should be enforceable	6	12%

The majority of the respondents indicated that in-person consultation and services were an expectation of the ICMP. It should be noted that while all respondents may not have explicitly stated that services should be provided in-person in response to this



question, all the respondents either commented or inferred during the interview session that in-person (face to face) service delivery was an expectation of the ICMP. The researcher heard on numerous occasions that service provided in-person was essential for the participants to engage in meaningful, open and honest communication. In addition to having services delivered in-person, participants emphasized the importance of accountability from management and participants regarding taking action on the service recommendations. It is important to participants that service outcomes are meaningful and in some cases this meant, enforceable. Further to this, many of the participants asserted that for the ICMP to be taken seriously by clients involved in the service and by RCMP employees generally, the recommendations made in GNARs should be carried out by the managers involved in the GNA process. It was reported in several interviews that the GNAR was not accessible to all the individuals involved in the GNA and that in those cases where the report was made available to all levels of clients involved in the GNA, not all (in some cases, none) of the recommendations made in the report were acted upon by management. There was also a concern that the GNARs were not being provided to all levels of management “up the chain of command” following the GNA and this lack of communication between management at different levels was thought to result in disputes to be over-looked by upper management because they were unaware that a dispute was disrupting the workplace. In some cases, there were long standing disputes in workplaces affecting a large employee population without higher level management’s knowledge. Some participants perceived that longstanding unaddressed disputes could not be handled by ICMP and would have to go to the grievance department for settlement. Most

participants interviewed indicated that if these same conflicts could be addressed earlier, they may have been resolvable. Both confidentiality and timely service were also important service components.

*QUESTION 6:* Did you benefit from the ICMP service experience? If so, how? If not, why not?

This question was designed to explore participants’ perception of their experience with the ICMP and the satisfaction with services that they received.

The data revealed:

<b>Benefited from ICMP experience</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Enhanced knowledge about conflict	4	24%
Helped me to see my part in the dispute	4	24%
Skeptical but some improvement to workplace conflict	2	12%
Helped to “air” feelings (mine and others)	2	12.5%
Transferred, don’t have to deal with it anymore	1	5%
Gave insight into how things can be resolved in a dignified way, with longevity	1	5%
As a manager it decreased time I had to spend addressing conflict in the workplace	1	5%
Resolved some of the conflict	2	12.5%

<b>Did not benefit from ICMP experience</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Dragged on and on	1	20%
Recommendations not implemented	4	80%

Most participants indicated that they had benefited in some way from their experience with the program. Many felt that they had grown personally from the experience because they gained insight into what role they played in the conflict and understood the conflict better even when the conflict had not been resolved. Those that had a negative experience with the ICMP service were generally disappointed with the outcome of the service. One participant asserted that the exercise of engaging in discussions had not met the expectation of a concrete outcome in terms of changes in the workplace. In another instance, an individual indicated that the workplace became more toxic after the intervention because now the problems had surfaced and people had been left feeling vulnerable and exposed from their participation with little resolution to the issues that had been exposed. Lack of “follow through” with recommendations was the reason provided for dissatisfaction with services in the majority of instances.

*QUESTION 7: What services were you provided?*

This question was designed to collect additional data about the services that were being provided by the ICMP. This data could then be compared with the data collected about what services were being offered from the file reviews. The responses are recorded below:

<b>ICMP Service</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
GNA	10	32%
GNAR	9	28%
Multiple services not specified	3	9%
Mediation for staff	2	6%
Mediation for self	5	16%
Offer of mediation	2	6%
Intake	1	4%

The data indicates that GNA and GNARs formed the majority of services that were provided to the participants of the program who were interviewed. Many interviewees did not call the service a GNA but rather described steps that are involved in a GNA. Because it appeared that the service being described was a GNA it was added into the GNA category by the researcher. Mediations made up the next largest category of services offered. These numbers appear to be aligned with the file review findings which indicated GNA followed by mediations were the primary services offered to participants of the program.

*QUESTION 8:* What was the effect of the services on you? On the dispute?

This question was designed to explore the level of satisfaction clients had with their experience with the program which could then be used to determine the outcomes of the services whether intended or unintended. The data revealed:

<b>Effect of ICMP Service (-)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Felt helpless	1	14%
Angry	1	14%
Frustration	3	44%
Dissatisfied	1	14%
Stressful process	1	14%

In the majority of instances where the participant reported a negative affect, people were frustrated with the process of the service and that their input seemed to be ignored or not heard.

<b>Effect of ICMP Service (+)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Relief	4	27%
Learned about conflict	2	13%
Was on stress leave, came back	1	6.5%
Reduced stress in workplace	1	6.5%
Felt good that something was being done about problem	4	27%
If conflict deescalates, my job was easier	3	20%

Most clients, who reported a positive experience from the program, indicated that they were relieved when the ICMP became involved in their workplace conflict because finally something was being done to address the discord in the office. In one case, a client reported being off work on stress leave due the workplace conflict and due to the changes that occurred in the office as a result of the ICMP intervention, the respondent was moved to another workplace and came back to work. Although being involved in the mediation had been extremely difficult, this individual expressed a high degree of loyalty to his/her employer and felt compelled to participate in the intervention in spite of much discomfort with participating in the process. In the end, the experience was a positive one for him/her.

The following chart indicates the reported effect of the service on the dispute:

<b>Effect of ICMP Service on dispute</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
People were transferred	5	22%
Not resolved, too entrenched	4	20%
Negative impact on participants	3	13%
Band aide only	1	4%
Diminished conflict	4	20%
Frustrated – GNAR showed practitioners didn't get it	1	4%
Conflict same as before	3	13%
Not sure yet, conflict ongoing	1	4%

In many cases, the conflict was resolved partially or entirely by transferring employees. In some cases, respondents indicated that the conflict was entrenched and because common ground could not be found between disputing parties in a unit, a transfer was the most feasible option for resolution.

*QUESTION 9:* Has your experience with the ICMP changed how you view conflict?

This question was designed to determine whether participants’ experiences with the ICMP service resulted in a change in their perspective about conflict in general. This data would help to determine the effects of the program activities on the participants and whether building capacity for conflict was an outcome of the ICMP services.

The data revealed:

<b>ICMP service has changed view of conflict</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes- helped me to mature	1	7%
Yes -opened my view and mind about conflict	4	27%
Yes -early intervention - should be tried	1	7%
Yes - a little, try to put myself in others’ shoes	1	7%
Yes -increased knowledge about conflict	3	19%
No – view conflict as bad before and after services	3	19%
No - but still optimistic	1	7%
No - same due to previous conflict training	1	7%

Ten of the fifteen interviewees indicated that their view of conflict changed as a result of the ICMP service. Of the ten interviewees who indicated that their perception of conflict changed, all of the perspectives were changed in a positive manner whether they reported a change personally and as a result of the service, they were more open to hearing another's point of view. In another case, the change referred to a better understanding of how a service offered by the ICMP can assist in resolving a workplace disputes and therefore, they would readily refer others to the program. Of those respondents who indicated no change to their perspective of conflict, most held a negative view of conflict before the ICMP service and this view was maintained following the service which they believed was disruptive and which created more "hard feelings" within the workplace.

*QUESTION 10: Were services delivered in a timely manner?*

This question was designed for the purpose of collecting data regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.

The data revealed:

Service delivery of ICMP	Number	Percent
Service delivery was timely	11	61%
Delays were reported due to staff changes in the ICMP	2	11%
Services were not timely	3	17%
Can't remember	2	11%

From a participant perspective, in the majority of instances, service delivery was timely.

*QUESTION 11:* What suggestions for improvement do you have for the program?

This was a voluntary question and was designed to provide an opportunity for interviewees to expand on their responses further regarding their experiences with the program and to collect data that may provide insight regarding areas in the ICMP services that require development. The following data was collected:

<b>Suggestions for ICMP Improvement</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Provide more info about program and program services	8	17%
Instructions on how to access the program	3	6%
Promote ICMP awareness	10	22%
More follow up with clients	3	6.5%
No suggestions	1	2%
Services should not extend beyond 3 months	1	2%
Timely reporting to managers	2	4%
Make managers accountable	4	8.5%
Earlier intervention	1	2%
Get more trained practitioners	4	8.5%
Training for managers	4	8.5%
Hire outside practitioners	2	4%
Keep ICMP its own entity (not under Wellness)	1	2%
Better resources for ICMP	1	2%
Conflict training should be mandatory (like harassment course)	2	4%

The majority of suggestions for improvement of the program were to promote awareness about the services, the outcomes of the services and how to access the program. One respondent suggested marketing ICMP services through email distribution of an e-newsletter update. One respondent suggested promotional items with ICMP



contact information printed on it such as a “squishy ball” with a slogan “if you are about to throw this at someone, call us!” The researcher heard suggestions of offering lunch time seminars on conflict or communication skills. Three interviewees remarked that on the Conflict Resolution Day in 2009 a booth was set up in the “K” Division HQ lobby and this was a great way to promote the program. Two participants suggested a news letter about the services and that they would like to hear about positive outcomes of services.

*QUESTION 12: Would you access the program again?*

The question was designed for the purpose of gathering information about the effectiveness of the program services and the program outcomes. The data revealed:

Of the fifteen participants interviewed, eleven out of fifteen would access the program again. Three of the eleven affirmative respondents qualified their responses by saying 1) I would participate but I would not initiate service 2) I would participate only because it is the protocol of this organization and 3) I would participate but I would be reluctant due to a negative experience the first time.

Of the four participants who would not access the program, the reasons provided were 1) that I felt violated by the process 2) I would have to be ordered to participate and 3) I had a bad experience the first time therefore I would not access the program again.

Based on the responses, it appears that although some of the participants may not have had the outcome they expected or hoped for, they would be willing to access the ICMP again for services because they personally benefited from the dispute resolution

process. It appears that those who would not access the program again had significant negative feelings about their experience with the program.

*QUESTION 13:* Would you refer someone to the program?

This question was designed to collect data regarding participants' confidence in the ICMP services and outcome. The data revealed:

Of the fifteen participants interviewed, thirteen indicated they would refer someone to the program, although two of these thirteen indicated that they would advise the person to check out other options first. One participant would not refer anyone to the program and one interview was not completed and therefore no response was recorded for this question.

The fact that most of the respondents would refer someone to the program indicates confidence in the program as a viable option for dispute resolution.

## Chapter 5 ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, an analysis of the research findings presented in Chapter 4 and the conclusions drawn from the analysis will be discussed using Logic Model II (see Appendix B.2) as a guide. The ICMP goals, as outlined in Logic Model II, are divided into six categories:

Goal 1: Development of a National Program with Standardized Operational Procedures

Goal 2: Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees

Goal 3: Training and Development of the Whole Organization

Goal 4: Develop Skilled Practitioners

Goal 5: Research/Evaluate Program Information

Goal 6: Promote Awareness of the ICMP by all RCMP Employees

The inputs, outputs and outcomes that have been identified for each of the six program goal categories will be analyzed and interpreted under each goal section discussion. In some instances, the conclusions also relate directly to answering the research sub questions and therefore these interpretations will be incorporated into the discussion within the appropriate goal category.

When the data was being compiled, the use of a logic model to organize the findings was effective for identifying any gaps that existed between the program goals, inputs/outputs and outcomes. In some cases, the outcome of a program activity was unclear because of an apparent gap between the ICMP components. Additionally, the logic model was effective in identifying the places where the program components were effectively linked to the program outcomes. Conclusions from the analysis will be drawn

from all three sets of data compiled in this study which include 1) the file reviews, 2) the practitioner interviews and 3) participant interviews. Data gathered from program documentation, the focus group discussion, observation and informal discussions with RCMP employee over the course of this project will also be included in this discussion.

***Goal 1: Development of a National Program with Standardized Operational Procedures***

The first goal of the program is to development a national program with standardized operational procedures and there are currently two inputs in pursuit of this goal.

*Input One:* The first input in pursuit of this goal is to establish a national framework for conducting ICM services through the creation of a national policy and procedures. It was found that standardized procedures and processes have been rolled out in 2008 to practitioners for conducting ICMP services nationally. At the regional level, it was reported that these procedures and processes are being followed at “K” Division and this assertion has been confirmed by the data which indicated similar responses among the practitioners to questions about what procedures are followed when conducting services. An analysis of whether other regions are following procedures as they were intended at the roll out is beyond the scope of this study and therefore is not known.

A national policy is not in place at the time of the data collection, rather, it was found that the policy is in the process of being drafted. Consequently, the outcome of this activity is not known at this time. Once in place, however, evidence that a national ICMP has been implemented would be seen in the roll out of a national program policy

document and seen in consistently applied standardized operating procedures for service delivery in all regions. Additionally, a standardized suite of services would be available to employees across the RCMP organization in each region. An important activity to achieve this goal of standardized services would be to develop research and evaluation tools that would reflect back to ICMP practitioners and managers, data regarding the outcomes of the services and this data in turn could be compared to the service delivery goals. This could be done through national reviews of services which is currently absent from the activities. The apparent gap in evaluation and research activities will be discussed in detail later in this chapter under the heading *Goal 5: Research and Evaluate Program Information*.

*Input Two:* A second input in pursuit of Goal 1 is the integration of ICMP with other departments (not yet determined) under the umbrella of “Employee Wellness.” Once the national policy document is completed for the ICMP, dialogue, an activity that is currently underway, with other departments at “K” Division, regarding integrating ICMP policy with other departments’ policies can take a more concrete form. The short, medium and long term outcomes of the integration of departments, and department policy and how this will affect the ICMP regionally and nationally, is not known at this time.

Evidence of a successful outcome of the integration activities, as expressed by interviewees, would be seen in services that were effectively linked, consistent, professional, credible and timely. To achieve this goal of an integrated national program, policies and procedures would first need to be consistently and effectively integrated into ICMPs regionally. It appears that prior to the national roll out of service procedures in

2008, regional ICMPs provided services in an ad hoc fashion. There was also inconsistent management goals and resource allocation regionally. Generally speaking, it appears that the above mentioned inconsistencies are still occurring. To achieve the goal of integrating ICMP with other programs, the findings show that evidence of the breaking down of silos and linking policies of the ICMP with other RCMP would have to occur.

*Sub Question One:* The inquiry into the first sub question: “Does the program have clearly defined goals, objectives and activities?” involved data collection specifically from ICMP practitioners and informal discussions with participants of the ICMP program. The findings indicate that the program has clearly defined goals, objectives and activities at the functional level as seen in the data gathered from the practitioner interviews. The activities of developing a national policy, which would standardize procedures and would also create an identifiable strategic direction of the program for participants and practitioners regionally is in pursuit of the goal and there are activities (outputs) in place to realize the goal, albeit with some significant gaps currently. The outcome and impact of the activity of creating policy and the integration of the ICMP with other RCMP is not currently known. Evidence that the goal has been achieved would be seen in outcomes of the services that are linked to the clearly stated mandate, mission and vision of the program.

While the findings reflect that the ICMP at “K” Division has clearly stated goals, competing goals from elements outside the ICMP unit are currently creating a barrier to achieving Goal 1. The findings point to a number of intersections where the attainment of ICMP goals may be derailed currently. One of these intersections, generally speaking,

is the structure of the RCMP organization itself which creates competition between RCMP across the organization because emphasis is placed on different initiatives at various times. Depending on the area or program in the organization that is receiving attention at a given time, resources are channeled to that area.

Specifically in “K” Division, data collected during this study showed that during the initial integration of various programs under the umbrella of “Employee Wellness,” staffing resources had been allocated to one area over another. Because of this, competition for resources between the ICMP and other programs could occur because the programs are now required to share funding. The findings reveal a lack of top down information sharing regarding the future direction of the ICMP may not be clear to all parties involved in service delivery and policy development. Unclear information and directives due to lack of communication and understanding about the changes underway to the strategic direction of one or more programs may affect the operation of a program and its service objectives.

It was also noted that while consistency in the delivery of services, policy and practitioner credentials is a goal at the national level, until there is a national program with clearly stated and implemented policy and procedures that are monitored, these areas remain largely open to regional interpretation and application. The national goals of the ICMP may be evolving due to the integration of departments and this process may require the regional goals to be redefined in the future, however, until this integration process was started, the research shows that at “K” Division at the level where services were being conducted, the goals and activities appear to be clearly defined.

*Sub Question Two:* Research findings reveal that at the functional level, the goals and the activities in pursuit of the goals of the ICMP are plausibly linked which affirms the second research sub question, “Are there plausible linkages established between the activities and the intended goals?”

Over the course of this study, however, resource allocation decisions at the executive level have produced a short term outcome that is contrary to the goal. When this study commenced in September, 2009 there were four practitioners delivering services. At the conclusion of the research there were no practitioners at “K” Division delivering services to RCMP employees. Research findings reveal that the stated goals and activities were plausibly linked until the recent changes to the program staffing and therefore, the current change to the outputs of no active staff is no service delivery. The short term outcome of the output of no service delivery is that there is no regional ICMP operating at “K” Division, however, this appears to be influenced by other factors in the larger RCMP organization system and is not a stated goal of the regional program.

It appears that due to the evolution of the national program, there is a lack of resources to effectively carry out the services at this time at “K” Division, which may be an unintended outcome of integration which is impacting the regional goals.

***Goal 2: Provide ICM Services for RCMP Employees***

The second goal of the ICMP is to provide ICM services to RCMP employees and there is currently one input in pursuit of the goal.

*Input One:* The input in pursuit of achieving this goal is to deliver timely and effective services. The output activities such as intakes, mediation, conflict coaching,



leadership conflict coaching training, facilitated discussions and GNAs were being offered at the start of this research project in fall 2009 and were consistent with the goal. Participating in the delivery of services were practitioners of the program and this activity was also plausibly linked to the goal. At the conclusion of the data collection of the research project in spring 2010 it was found that while practitioners had been participating in program activities previously, this was no longer the case because no ICMP services are being provided to RCMP employees understandably creating a gap in the model. The short and medium outcome of program components (the suite of services) being delivered during the period that services were being offered was that generally speaking, participants were being positively impacted by the services, particularly on a personal level with regards to their capacity for conflict.

While the medium and long term outcomes of discontinuing services has not been measured, a short term outcome of the ICMP no longer offering conflict resolution services to employees at the RCMP is that no new referrals are coming into the program and existing files are on hold. Based on the findings regarding workplace issues being the primary source of conflict within the RCMP organization, the medium range outcome of no services being provided may be an increase in workplace conflict due to no early intervention of disputes. Also, the finding revealed that managers valued advice and leadership conflict coaching provided to them by the ICMP practitioners. It is possible that managers who regularly contact the program for advice on workplace disputes in their areas, may now be required to spend more of their work day addressing disputes independently and unsupported. The long term outcome of no services being offered is

uncertain, however, it can be surmised based on conflict resolution literature that unaddressed conflict in the workplace will likely have a negative impact the organization in terms of decreased productivity, increase in absenteeism and decreased employee satisfaction rates.

Resource allocation at this time appears to be a central issue since at the conclusion of the data collection phase of this project, there were no practitioners delivering ICMP services to “K” Division employees. The staffing vacancies were due in part to a) one contract position not being renewed, b) redefined job descriptions for two practitioner positions and c) one LOA left vacant. This situation exemplifies an apparent disconnection between the goals of the ICMP at the functional and operational level.

*Sub Question Two:* In most cases, the activities appear to be closely linked to the intended goal of providing ICM services to employees. For example, the data showed that Group Needs Assessments (GNA) comprised the largest segment of “types of service” offered and delivered. A GNA is a service that when delivered effectively, has the potential to achieve multiple ICMP goals at the same time because it provides the following: a) identifies issues and supports dispute resolution for RCMP members, b) builds conflict capacity of employees through modeling and conflict training to those employees involved in the GNA process, c) aides the ongoing development of practitioner skills through multiple intake interviews and group facilitation experience and d) encourages feedback through evaluation forms which assists program delivery and research goals. Because of this, providing GNA services are clearly linked to the ICMP intended goals.

*Sub Question Three:* Answers for the third sub question: “Are the activities or interventions implemented consistently and as intended?” were explored by examining the following areas: 1) the types of conflicts being referred to the program, 2) the process by which services were being matched to the conflict and 3) the service delivery. The data collected revealed that while a number of different types of conflicts were referred to the ICMP, the presenting problem in the majority of files were instances of work place conflict issues. This category included disputes involving working relationships, interpersonal conflict and group conflict. The data further revealed that the predominant method of matching services to the conflict was through conducting intakes. The intake process is detailed in Chapter 4 under the heading Practitioner Interview Findings; Question Two and it was found that the intake procedure was employed consistently by the practitioners. The findings derived from all data collection sources reveals that in the majority of cases, service were delivered effectively and in a timely manner. It should be noted that in terms of the services being delivered as intended, the findings are significant because while the participants of the program interviewed indicated that they were aware of the harassment and grievance units, which are the most visible and structured dispute resolution systems currently operating in the RCMP, these units are designed to deal with grievances and harassment claims only. The formal process is both costly in terms of 1) employee wellbeing, 2) production rates, 3) time taken from other management responsibilities and 4) decreased moral. The stated goal of the informal program is to offer dispute resolution services to employees in an effort to increase employee wellbeing through effective and efficient service delivery and by diverting files away from the

formal process(es). Research shows that while the ICMP is a less visible dispute resolution system at the RCMP (although it has been operating for more than 10 years) the services are highly effective in resolving conflicts, particularly in the early stages of the dispute. Early intervention of workplace conflict, as discussed widely in conflict literature, has been shown to be most effective in resolving workplace conflict; the primary form of conflict in the RCMP.

*Sub Question Four:* “What is the effect of implementation on the program participants?” Based on the findings, the majority of participants of the program report being positively impacted by the services whether on a personal level or at the group level. When interviewees indicated that they had been negatively impacted by their participation in an ICMP service, the majority of the negative feedback was due less to the type of service or the method of service delivery rather; participants expressed disappointment with the outcome of the service recommendations implementation and follow through. Participants stated they would like to see management and those involved in the dispute held accountable for implementing recommendations from the service reports. Some participants felt exposed by the process and one participant called the program a “band aide solution” and stated that the program was not credible because there were not enough people to do the work and to follow up the outcomes of the recommendations.

***Goal 3: Training and Development of the Whole Organization***

Training and development of the whole organization is an ICMP goal that has been pursued through various inputs over the period 2003 to 2009. Currently, the study identified two inputs in pursuit of this goal.

A brief historical review will provide the context for the findings regarding current training initiatives. In 2003, a “K” Division ADR pilot program commenced. At this time, the main priorities in the program were to build awareness of ADR principles, to conduct basic (prepackaged) Interest-Based Negotiation training and simple (non-complex) mediations (Stokke, personal communication, 2010). It was believed at the national level that if programs across the country trained employees in basic communication, negotiation, and mediation that conflict would more effectively be managed and prevented. Activities conducted by practitioners’ through this period emphasized training RMs for a volunteer mediation roster which would allow RCMP employees to deliver services. Although many RMs received training, ADR in many divisions lost focus and programs came to realize that previously trained mediators had skills that were perishable and they were no longer qualified due to lack of use and application of their training. During this period, although the activities were in pursuit of the goal, the outcome was a roster of employees with limited training to conduct services. Two ADR staffing vacancies at “K” Division in 2005 meant a minimum of services were delivered for a period of time. The ICMP was revitalized in 2006 with two new ADR personal and a new training focus.

*Input One:* In spite of the current service delivery gap due to vacant practitioner positions in 2010, a comprehensive training project for the whole organization is

currently being developed. It appears that the scope of training programs will widen again in the future, similar to the training goals in 2003. An important difference with the new training is that management training is the focus rather than the general RCMP employee population. Based on the research findings, the three phase approach will likely include: Phase 1. conflict awareness (emphasis: on self), Phase 2. building ability (emphasis: lead oneself), and Phase 3. leading others in conflict (emphasis: on managers and supervisors). While the curriculum is currently in the development stages, it appears to be linked to the goal. Because the training has not yet been rolled out to managers, the short, medium and long term impact of the innovative training program remains unknown.

*Input Two:* The primary activity in pursuit of the training goal most recently was GNAs and training was embedded into the service. It was reported that during the period from 2005 to 2009 the scope of training at “K” Division was narrowed according to program resources. Aligning services with available personal appeared to be an effective way to deliver services while at the same time pursuing the training goal. Currently, the program is again in transition. While GNAs remain the primary method of delivering training to the organization by providing conflict coaching to participants of the service throughout the GNA process, there are currently no practitioners to provide this service. The short, medium and long term implications of this gap in service delivery are not known at this time.

***Goal 4: Developing Skilled Practitioners***

Developing skilled practitioners is a goal being pursued at the ICMP and the findings revealed that there are three inputs in pursuit of this goal.

*Input One and Two:* The findings indicate that there are significant changes underway to the hiring criteria for conflict practitioners. Standard procedures, while currently not in place, are being drafted and include: 1) hiring professional conflict practitioners from outside of the organization 2) standardized credentials for conflict practitioners. These activities appear to be linked to the goal in terms of standardizing practitioner skill sets from the point of hire. Clearly defined job descriptions and hiring guidelines will assure consistent hiring practices and there is currently a gap in the outputs (activities) in this area. Because previously there was a gap in this activity, the outcome has been inconsistent skill sets among practitioners in regards to education, qualification and experience within ICMPs regionally and nationally from one region to the next.

*Input Three:* To create activities that will place emphasis on appreciative inquiry, skill building through peer reviews, mentoring and reflective practice would expand capacity among professionally trained practitioners. At this time, these activities are inconsistently performed at “K” Division and it was reported, in other ICMPs nationally. Because of this, there is currently a gap between the activities and the goal. It appears that there is not sufficient ongoing training for practitioners because there is no evidence of practitioner training initiatives. Plans are in progress to support consistency in service delivery between regions through holding national meetings to review already established procedures and process. National meetings with practitioners have been limited to date

and while they are planned as part of the future development of skilled practitioners, the current impact of the limited activities is lack of cohesiveness among practitioners, inconsistency within regional ICMPs, ad hoc process and variances in service delivery due to uneven professional standards. Outcomes that would suggest the goal is being attained would include: meeting or exceeding standardized credentials among practitioners, on-going training for practitioners, consistent practices, and an established mentoring processes.

*Sub Question Three: Are the activities or interventions implemented consistently and as intended?*

From the data gathered from the practitioner interviews regarding how services are delivered and whether the services are delivered as intended, as noted previously, it was found that the steps in offering services are predominantly offered in the same manner from one practitioner to the next at “K” Division. It should be noted that data gathered from the focus group meeting indicated that while the services may follow a similar process, the method of delivery likely vary from one practitioner to another given the current variances in skill, experience and education of the practitioners providing services within “K” Division and in other regions. It would be difficult to measure variances in outcomes based on a practitioner style, although this was of interest to the focus group participants. It would be reasonable to consider evaluating how practitioner style impacts service outcomes and this could provide valuable insight for future program development and planning.

***Goal 5: Research/Evaluate Program Information***



The research and evaluation of program information is an essential goal in tracking the development of the evolving ICMP and there are currently three inputs in pursuit of this goal.

*Input One, Two and Three:* Inputs in pursuit of this goal currently include 1) feedback forms given to participants at the conclusion of a service, 2) standardized file documentation forms, 3) quarterly and annual reporting of program statistics.

While there are evaluation and feedback forms provided to participants following service delivery research showed that not all the feedback forms are returned and of those returned the information contained on the forms in some cases, may not be relayed to practitioners who provided the services or may not be used for file review purposes. This lack of information sharing appears to be a gap in the activities in pursuit of the goal. This also impacts the goal of consistent service delivery. It was suggested that an online system for sharing evaluation form feedback with practitioners and management involved in ICMP regionally and nationally would be an appropriate evaluation and research activity.

Some planned future evaluation efforts include, implementing a new data capture technique online to ensure consistent reporting on every file regionally and nationally. File reporting is not consistent currently and file information is not available online to either program managers or practitioners. Within the ICMP reporting structure, there appears to be dysfunction between the operational reporting and functional reporting lines. The disconnect results in miscommunication in the short term and the affects in the mid to long range impact cannot determined at this time. It may be inferred that the

impact may be significant because the ICMP is one of the only programs that has broad ranging influence and its activities impact other service departments in the organization. Standardized reporting of file activities is necessary to assess client's satisfaction rates and to provide quality assurance for the delivery of services. Effective and consistent research methods will allow evaluation of every service provided and the effect of implementation of services on the program participants could be measured on an ongoing and long term basis. This information is currently unavailable and because the effects of the program on its participants cannot be reliably measured, this evaluability study can conclude that a comprehensive program evaluation is not possible at this time.

For the ICMP program ongoing research and evaluation to be effective, activities such as reviewing the client feedback forms and reflecting this information back to all stakeholders is necessary. Access to file reviews, quarterly and annual reports, program statistics and progress reports must be provided to all levels of management and practitioners who are charged with the maintenance and development of the program. It appears from the findings that commitment from management to review and act upon feedback from the evaluation forms received from participants and satisfaction surveys is missing from the model.

***Goal 6: Promote Awareness of the ICMP to all RCMP Employees***

To promote awareness of the ICMP to all RCMP employees is a goal that was stated in all areas of data collections and was emphasized particularly in the participant interviews. Planning promotional events is currently the one input in pursuit of the goal, although it remains largely undefined. The output (activity) that was identified in

pursuit of this goal was setting up a booth in the HQ lobby on Conflict Awareness Day. Some informal methods of promoting the ICMP have included: 1) word of mouth and 2) by practitioners merely being visible among RCMP staff when conducting services.

*Sub Question Four:* What is the effect of implementation on the program and on the participants?

It appears that one of the outcomes/impacts of services provided by the ICMP is that in many cases employees felt they had grown in awareness about their part in the conflict following the intervention. Because of these findings, it appears that the ICMP services have been effective in building conflict capacity among those employees who have had experiences with the program. Evidence that conflict capacity is being built was revealed in the accounts of personal growth from being involved in the conflict intervention by participants from all levels of the organization. This researcher heard cases where individuals felt helpless in their conflict ridden workplace and through the GNA process; they became able to see other perspectives on the issue. In some cases, this realization was significant for all parties involved in the dispute and the conflict was resolved, in some cases the conflict did not resolve but the process alleviated some tension and the workplace atmosphere improved. Because of these experiences, participants asserted that the ICMP should be more visible in the RCMP organization regionally and nationally so that others might gain knowledge of the resources available to them from the program and in turn, access the services. One person suggested a newsletter, another web site that would post positive outcomes of interventions so that employees with negative experiences from a service could see that some positive

outcomes came of the services too. This individual indicated it would be beneficial to hear of positive outcomes from the program because they were a referral source and it would give them confidence that the files they were referring to the ICMP were being resolved. Additionally, reporting positive outcomes to informal dispute management could bolster confidence in the program by other individuals unsure of the efficacy of the informal process. One participant suggested promotional “give-always” and another suggested well advertised noon hour training sessions. The majority of the respondents indicated that there was not enough awareness of the program and of services. Whether the short and medium term positive experiences of these individuals will translate into long term conflict capacity building within the organization at large is unknown.

An outcome of the gaps in activities linked the goal of promoting the program could be that fewer referrals are being made to the program; however this result is difficult to measure. One respondent thought that if more people knew more about the program more may access the program resulting in workplace conflict decreasing significantly. While the activities currently in place to promote the ICMP are linked to the goal, they are limited.

It should be noted that the enthusiasm demonstrated by interviewees when providing suggestions for improving the visibility of the program seem to indicate that employees want the ICMP program to succeed and that they see value in continuing the services being offered. Evidence that the goal of awareness of the ICMP among the RCMP employee population had been realized would be seen in a broad understanding by all employees that the ICMP exists and is available. Respondents suggested that

attainment of the goal would also been seen when less people were mad and disgruntled while off duty or on disability, or on prolonged LOAs. Other evidence, put forward by respondents regarding possible outcomes of greater program awareness and confidence in services among employees might be 1) an increased willingness of employees to resolve disputes though ICMP 2) when there was a decrease in harassment complaints and 3) when managers effectively lead.

Resolution of workplace disputes and withdrawn harassment charges are short and medium term outcomes from program activities. The long term impact of greater program awareness is not known at this time. The program has a history of providing valuable services for training and resolving disputes in the organization. How ICMP services will be delivered and the methods of promoting awareness of the services in the future are largely not known at this time.

## Chapter 6 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research reveals that in the majority of cases, the types of conflicts that RCMP employees state they experience are interpersonal conflict in the workplace with either another employee or with a supervisor. Interpersonal disputes that arise from general working conditions have been managed by the ICMP at “K” Division with varying degrees of resources from 2003 - 2009. This study’s aim was to provide insight into the capacity of the ICMP at “K” Division to successfully deliver services on an ongoing basis and to achieve the stated intended goals of the program by proposing an overarching research question: What conditions must exist for the goals and objectives of ICMP “K” Division to be effectively implemented?

In this chapter, recommendations will be offered based on the conclusions drawn from the analysis in the Chapter 5. Additionally, this inquiry will suggest that systems thinking is the essential condition necessary for a national shared vision of conflict resolution and management can be realized at the RCMP.

**Goal One:** To develop a national program with standardized operational procedures is currently underway. It is recognized that the work of drafting a national policy for the ICMP will continue and be completed to ensure standardization of types of services being offered, delivery of services, practitioner credentials and hiring practices. To ensure that program components are integrated consistently and as intended in all regions, it is recommended that the national ICMP goals are aligned with management goals in all regional ICMPs. The alignment of goals could be achieved through direct communication among managers at different levels in and between regions. Effective

lines of communication could ensure sustained resource allocation for ICMPs operating in each region and would ensure continued and consistent service delivery.

**Goal Two:** To provide ICM services for RCMP employees is stated as the program goal but not currently an active output activity because there are no practitioners to carry out the activity. The findings have shown that in the majority of cases, interventions had a positive effect on clients and by inference on the organization. Early intervention of conflicts in the workplace prevent escalation and decrease the amount of time managers are required to spend on resolving disputes. Therefore it is recommended that the gap between the completion of the restructuring of the program and the start up of service delivery be narrowed to decrease the negative impact that the discontinuance of ICMP services may have on the organization.

Research shows that the ICMP is effective in addressing disputes before they manifest into long-term high conflict situations. Because the ICMP is being integrated under the umbrella of “Employee Wellness”, the types of files being referred to the ICMP may necessitate an adjustment to the services being offered by the ICMP. For example, additional initiatives that foster a culture of acceptance for employees off work and returning from disability to their pre disability workplace may be required in the future. Based on data collected from informal interviews, it was found that due to lengthy absences and the high number of employees off duty on disability or LOAs currently at the RCMP. This has resulted in increased workloads for those employees still working which in turn has caused resentment and negative attitudes towards absent employees. A pervasive negative attitude in turn, can create a barrier for employees returning to work.

It is recommended that supervised return to work plans and early intervention services become common place in RCMP workplace in an effort to manage LOA's and shorten the length of disability absences. With these measures in place, the likelihood of employees being further ostracized for being off work would decrease and the likelihood of expedited returns to work increase. Details regarding these types of workplace conflict situations were not specified in the data, however, they may become a significant type of dispute referral category going forward with the integration of programs.

**Goal Three:** With regards to training and development of the whole organization, it is recommended that the activities currently underway to develop a three phase leadership/management training program be completed and rolled out in an effort to address the gap in training for managers and supervisors. The need for leadership training within the organization was a common theme in the data collected in this study. It is essential for workplace disputes to be addressed effectively at the onset by managers in an effort to reduce the escalation of workplace conflict.

Training of the whole organization is an essential component in creating a culture where all employees embrace and integrate a new way of responding to workplace conflict. The development of communication strategies that foster building respectful workplaces where all employees have a role in maintaining a respectful and healthy workplace is recommended. Continued and consistent resource allocation is an essential condition for the delivery of conflict resolution education and training.

**Goal Four:** To achieve the goal of developing skilled practitioners, it is recognized that the standardization of hiring practices in all regions is underway. The continuation of



this activity is recommended to ensure services are offered by highly qualified professional conflict practitioners from outside of the organization. Clearly defined job descriptions and a hiring policy will ensure consistent hiring practices going forward and thereby support consistent and effectively measured service delivery outcomes.

**Goal Five:** There are significant gaps identified in the logic model regarding the program evaluation activities particularly in the ability to assess the extent to which the interventions (program components), individually or in combination, affect change in the desired directions for the target groups. The outcome evaluations must also identify the both the positive and negative (and unintended) effects of the program or initiative. It is recommended that once the current changes to the ICMP components are completed and implemented, an additional evaluability study on a broader scale be performed to evaluate the impact of program services on participants and to identify any changes the integration of programs and the newly drafted national policy has created with regard to the program goals. Consistent file documentation and service outcome tracking measures will be required for reliable outcome data to be gathered. Perhaps if statistical reporting and conclusive positive program outcomes were effectively measured and presented to all levels of management nationally, a persuasive case for the far reaching benefits of the program activities would achieve “buy- in” from all levels of the organization and thereby ensure consistent resource allocation and continuance of program services.

**Goal Six:** To promote awareness of the ICMP by all RCMP employees, it is recommended that initiatives that create greater visibility of the ICMP that may in turn increase the likelihood of referrals to the program be established. Research shows that

the ICMP is a valuable and valued resource, and it is largely underutilized by RCMP employees. As the program becomes visible to employees, this will serve to increased familiarity with the program services. Initiatives described previously in Chapter 4 Section 3; participant interview findings, question 11 and in Chapter 5 Section Goal 6, to promote a better understanding of how the program can benefit employees and their workplace may create increased opportunities for early intervention measures to be employed.

***A Shared Vision:*** The development and implementation of an ICMP that is both effective and efficient involves commitment from all levels of the organization to ADR practices and philosophy. Constantino and Merchant (1996) identify that in order to design and improve conflict management systems or strategies the concept of appropriate dispute resolution is more useful in that the dispute resolution strategy because the program must be appropriate for the particular dispute or problems and there must be a fit between the process and the problem (p. 41). Further to this concept of developing appropriate dispute resolution programs David Sunahara, in “Healing the Workplace, The RCMP Experience with Alternative Dispute Resolution” asserts that integration of ADR as a philosophy is necessary in order for the RCMP to shift from an adversarial and rule driven culture through a “systematic and unforgiving revamping of the Force’s entire dispute resolution regime” as stated earlier in this study (Sunahara, 2002, p.100). Peter Senge asserts that “without systems thinking, the seed of vision falls on harsh soil. If non systemic thinking predominates the first condition for nurturing vision is not met: genuine belief that we can make our vision real in the future” (1990, p. 12). Based on the

research findings, it is appears that the RCMP as an organization has not achieved this shift in a shared vision whereby the culture can evolve from rights to interest based thinking. Senge asserts,

[S]ystems thinking also needs the disciplines of building shared vision, mental models, team learning and personal mastery to realize its potential. Building shared vision fosters a commitment to the long term. Mental models focus on the openness needed to unearth shortcoming in our present ways of seeing the world Team learning develops the skills of groups of people to look for the larger picture beyond individual perspectives. And personal mastery fosters the personal motivation to continually learn how our actions affect our world (1990, p. 12).

The activities currently underway to revitalize and restructure the ICMP program at the RCMP illustrate the tremendous potential for the creation of the RCMP as a learning organization. The essential condition that must exist and what appears to be a significant barrier to the realization of this condition, is for all levels of the organization to share the vision from a systems perspective.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide Questions: Practitioners

- 1) Are any program components (services) missing from the logic model?
- 2) How do each of the program components operate?
- 3) Are any goals and effects missing in the logic model?
- 4) What does the goal mean to you?
- 5) What would satisfy you that the goal or effect was attained?
- 6) Are there any competing goals?
- 7) Are the causal linkages plausible (does the program do anything in pursuit of the goals and effects?)

## Appendix B1: Logic Model I

Program: Informal Conflict Management Program: “K” Division RCMP

Objective: To Design, Implement and Integrate Informal Methods of Conflict Management

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Long</i>
1) Establish a Framework for conducting ICM services	a. Develop policy and procedures for program				
2) Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	a. GNA b. mediations c. leadership training d. communication training, workshops e. IBN training				
3) Develop training services	a. needs assessments b. interviews c. workshops d. meetings e. presentations f. workshops				
4) Develop skilled practitioners	a. define roles of practitioners within K Division b. develop criteria to assess candidates c. assess candidate d. develop and deliver workshops e. skills training f. coaching				
5) Research information	a. meetings b. continuous improvement, monitoring c. evaluation, reports				

## Appendix B2: Logic Model II

Program: Informal Conflict Management Program: “K” Division RCMP

Objective: To Design, Implement and Integrate Informal Methods of Conflict Management

Program Goals	Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes – Impact		
		Activities	Participation	Short	Medium	Long
1) Development of a National Program with Standardized Operational Procedures	1) a. Establish a Framework for conducting ICM services b. Integration of departments i.e. Harassment, Health Services, EAP	1) a. Develop National policy b. procedures for program c. Integration of departments i.e. Harassment, Health Services, EAP d. standardize Practitioner credentials	1) a. National policy draft in progress b. standardized National operating procedures in progress c. dialogue with other departments in progress d. credential criteria policy	1) a. uncertain b. uncertain c. uncertain d. inconsistent delivery of services	1) a. uncertain b. uncertain c. uncertain d. uncertain	1) a. uncertain b. uncertain c. uncertain d. uncertain
2) Provide ICM Services for RCMP employees	2) deliver timely and effective services	2) a. intake b. mediations c. leadership conflict coaching d. GNA e. conflict coaching f. facilitated discussion	2) a. not currently being offered b. not currently being offered c. not currently being developed d. groups under 8 offered internally, groups over 8 offered externally – on hold	2) Services well received in most cases, delivered in timely, - no new referrals -open files on hold	2) unknown	2) unknown
3) Training and development of the whole organization	3) a. deliver three phase integrative training for managers b. embed training in service delivery	3) a. leadership training b. draft three phase integrative training c. GNA	3) a. on hold b. being developed c. not being offered	3) a. unknown b. unknown c. unknown	3) a. unknown b. unknown c. unknown	3) a. unknown b. unknown c. unknown
4) Develop skilled practitioners	4) a. hire professional Practitioners b. standardize credentials c. emphasize appreciative inquiry	4) a. define roles of practitioners within K Division b. develop criteria to assess candidates c. assess candidate d. develop and deliver workshops e. skills training f. mentoring	4) in progress	4) unknown	4) unknown	4) unknown
5) Research/Evaluate Program Information	5) Consistently Implement Policy and Procedures	5) a. meetings b. continuous improvement, monitoring c. evaluation, reports	5) a. on hold b. on hold c. in progress	5) unknown	5) unknown	5) unknown
6) Promote awareness of the ICMP by all RCMP Employees	6) Plan promotional events	6) ADR day, services	6) on hold	6) unknown	6) unknown	6) unknown

## Appendix C: Research Questions Guide: File Review

- 1) How are the program services implemented?
- 2) Are the components well defined and implemented in a prescribed manner?
- 3) Are the goals and effects clearly specified?
- 4) Are the causal linkages between the goals/objectives and services plausible?
- 5) Who is served by the program?
- 6) What appear to be the effects of the program on participants?

File Review Form:

File #

Presenting Problem:

Participant(s) Job Title:

Service(s) Provided:

Outcome:

Invite for interview?

Notes:

## **Appendix D: Interview Questions: Participant Question Guide**

- 1) What is your impression of the ICMP? Did your impression change after accessing services?
- 2) How did you access the program?
- 3) Why do you or why do you not use the ICMP?
- 4) What services do you expect?
- 5) How do you need to see services provided?
- 6) Did you benefit from the ICMP? If so, how? If not, why not?
- 7) What services were you provided?
- 8) What was the effect of the services on you? On the dispute?
- 9) Has your experience with the ICMP changed how you view conflict?
- 10) Were services delivered in a timely manner?
- 11) What suggestions for improvement do you have for the program?
- 12) Would you access the program again?
- 13) Would you refer someone to the program?

## Appendix E: LETTER OF INVITATION

February 19, 2010

Dear [Prospective Participant],

I would like to invite you to be part of a research project that I am conducting. This project is part of the requirement for a Master's Degree in Conflict Analysis and Management, at Royal Roads University. My name is Donna Cross and my credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling Dr. Fred Oster.

The objective of this research project is to conduct an evaluability study for a Program Evaluation of the Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP) at the RCMP "K" Division.

I will be submitting the final report to Dr. Fred Oster at Royal Roads University for the fulfillment of the Major Research Project component for CAMN 690.

The team research project will consist of reviewing program documentation, client files, conducting interviews (by telephone and in person) and focus groups.

Your name was chosen as a prospective participant as you have accessed one of the Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP) services between the years 2003 and 2010.

Information will be recorded in hand written and typed format and, where appropriate summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless your specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

Measures are planned to ensure the confidentiality of the research subjects. Individuals will not be identified by specific conversations in the research paper. The paper will be distributed to the RCMP contact, Ms. Felicity Edwards and Dr. Fred Oster and will be published as per the MRP protocols. However, in spite of precautions if there is a breach of confidentiality or the analysis of the conflict issue for which ICMP services were sought triggers emotional issues the individual will be offered after care, such as, a referral to a professional caregiver.

A copy of the final report will be published and will be available to study participants.

Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have additional questions regarding the project and its outcomes. There will not be a debriefing session at the end of the research project.

There are no unforeseen conflicts of interests in this method of data collection.

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

If you would like to participate in my research project, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Donna Cross

## Appendix F: RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

My name is Donna Cross, and this research project is part of the requirement for a Masters of Conflict Analysis and Management at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning Dr. Fred Oster.

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in my research project: An Analysis and Assessment of an Informal Conflict Management Program in a Large Organizational System.

The objective of which to conduct an evaluability study for a Program Evaluation of the Informal Conflict Management Program (ICMP) at the RCMP “K” Division.

The research will consist of reviewing program documents, client files, conducting interviews (by telephone or in person for approximately 30 – 60 minutes) and focus groups (approximately 1- 2 hours). I will be submitting my final report to Ms. Felicity Edwards, Faculty Advisor and Dr. Fred Oster, Program Head of the School of Conflict Management. This Major Research Project completes the course requirements for CAMN 690.

Information will be recorded in hand-written or typed format and, where appropriate, summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

Measures are planned to ensure the confidentiality of the research subjects. Individuals will not be identified by specific conversations in the research paper. The paper will be distributed to the RCMP contact, Ms. Felicity Edwards and Dr. Fred Oster and will be published as per the MRP protocols. However, in spite of precautions if there is a breach of confidentiality or the analysis of the conflict issue for which ICMP services were sought triggers emotional issues the individual will be offered after care, such as, a referral to a professional caregiver.

A copy of the final report will be available to research participants.

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

By signing this letter, you give free and informed consent to participate in this project.

Name: (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_