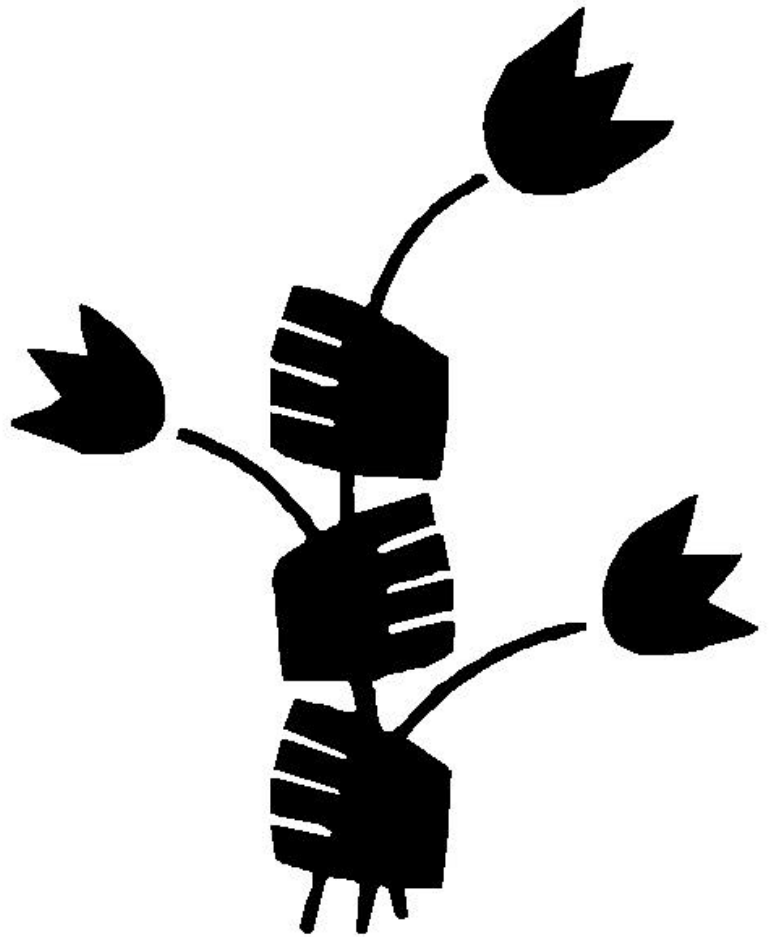


# Beginning a Long Journey



# Beginning a Long Journey

A Review of Projects Funded by the  
Family Violence Prevention Division,  
Health Canada,  
Regarding Violence in Aboriginal Families



Our mission is to help the people of Canada maintain and improve their Health.

*Health Canada*

*Beginning a Long Journey* was prepared by Robert Hart for the Family Violence Prevention Division, Health Canada.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official views of Health Canada.

Également en français sous le titre  
*Début d'un long parcours*

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For further information on family violence issues, please contact:

**National Clearinghouse on Family Violence**

Health Promotion and Programs Branch  
Health Canada

Address Locator: 1918C2  
Ottawa, Canada K1A 1B4  
(613) 957-2938

Fax: (613) 941-8930  
Fax Link: (613) 941-7285 or toll-free:  
1-888-267-1233 or call toll-free:  
**1-800-267-1291**

Internet Homepage: <http://www.hc-sc.ca/nc.cn>



TTY/TDD users: (613) 952-6396  
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# Introduction

## **A Note on Methodology:**

This report is based on a review of files of 15 projects funded by the Family Violence Prevention Division of Health Canada under the federal government's Family Violence Initiative (1991-1996). These 15 projects were all conceived, developed and implemented by Aboriginal people; and all were meant to address one or more forms of violence in Aboriginal families and to do so in a nationally innovative fashion. The file review assessed the significance and accomplishments of the projects. It also identified characteristics that reflect their culturally appropriate nature.

Wherever possible, to ensure the report's accuracy, representatives of the actual projects were contacted to verify information regarding accomplishments. As well, a wider group of people, including representatives from Aboriginal associations and educational institutions, reviewed the information on cultural appropriateness that emerged from the study. Officials in other, related federal government programs were also asked to comment. Thanks are due to these reviewers (see Appendix II), especially given the

weight of their schedules and the limited time they were given to consider the material. Their willingness to work with the study was universal, very much appreciated and essential to producing a document that, it is hoped, can be used by Aboriginal communities to develop better services.

Every attempt has been made to faithfully incorporate the feedback from reviewers. The views expressed in the paper, however, are solely those of the author and should not be attributed to any of the reviewers or to the Family Violence Prevention Division of Health Canada.

## **Historical Context:**

Although family violence has always been with us, it has been only in the last few decades that we have begun to fully and publicly recognize its presence, explore its causes and effects, and systematically seek the means to address it. We have come to realize that the problem of violence is rooted in the most fundamental structural and cultural aspects of our society and that a long and sustained effort will be required to effectively address those underlying causes and reduce the amount of violence our communities suffer. We are just beginning a long journey.

As our understanding of the forms of family violence has grown, so too have our efforts to lessen their effects and remove their causes. The second federal

Family Violence Initiative (1991-1996) supported a great deal of ground-breaking progress toward this goal. A five-year effort, involving many government departments and programs, the Initiative committed \$136 million to a wide variety of community-based projects carried out in all parts of Canada. The common objective driving these projects was to increase understanding of the nature of family violence and to improve our ability, as a society, to address it.

In the course of the Initiative, federal funding programs partnered with community groups, voluntary organizations, universities, the business sector and other levels of government to develop, deliver and evaluate more than 3 000 projects. Violence within Aboriginal families was a prime area of interest for the Initiative, and all federal partners funded projects addressing it.

This paper reviews the funding activity of Health Canada's Family Violence Prevention Division in this regard – 15 projects in total. Although these projects constitute only a fraction of all those funded by all sources under the Initiative, they do constitute a representative sample, reflecting all the major categories of projects carried out under the Initiative:

- **prevention** or public awareness and education projects;
- **professional training and sensitization** projects, including

those that developed original training resource material;

- **demonstration** or service model development projects; and
- **research** or data-gathering projects.

Because of the representative character of the 15 projects analyzed (see Appendix I), they allow us to draw some conclusions that should be useful to those active in prevention, training, treatment and policy development work for Aboriginal people.

This paper also explores the development of “culturally appropriate” practice reflected in these projects and stresses the importance of this aspect of the work.

Just as the projects funded by the Family Violence Prevention Division constituted only a small part of the larger federal government response to family violence, the Initiative itself was only one part of a larger social reaction, as advocacy groups, voluntary organizations, communities and governments began to focus on the issue. In looking at what these projects tell us, we can see the shape of the ongoing task of addressing family violence in a concerted way and on a national scale.

## **The First Steps: Public Awareness and Education**

As “family violence” slowly came to be formally recognized by community activists and service providers, one of the fundamental obstacles they encountered was the public silence surrounding the issue. This phenomenon of silence, denial and minimization was still significant by the early 1990s. The Family Violence Initiative therefore sought to increase Canadians’ awareness of the prevalence of the problem. Projects carried out by Aboriginal people reflected an especially wide range of strategies to increase awareness. For example:

- ◆ The Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories developed dramatic public service announcements to create a broad public awareness and instill a sense of priority about the issue. Aboriginal actors created a context in which violence could be discussed by portraying situations that had realistic meaning in Aboriginal communities.
- ◆ Pauktuutit, the Inuit Women’s Association of Canada, brought discussion of family violence to the community level by soliciting drawings depicting spousal abuse and using them to create booklets to further encourage public discussion.

Producing resource material in this way served as a participative method of raising awareness – especially effective because it was rooted in the reality of the communities that produced it.

- ◆ Headlines Theatre Company of Vancouver supported awareness building in an even more interactive fashion by using the “Power Play” as a means of engaging audience participation and as a catalyst for stimulating community involvement. The Company’s original play, *Out of the Silence*, addressed family violence issues in the context of Aboriginal communities.
- ◆ The Community Legal Education Association of Manitoba developed a comprehensive approach to briefing community residents about services relevant to family violence in order to help people use the service system to its full potential.

## **Focusing Awareness and Education: Key Partners**

Efforts such as these – in the broad Canadian population – generated considerable public response. As it became increasingly acceptable not only for the public to acknowledge the existence of the problem but for victims to seek help and protection, the human service system was pressured to respond effectively. Need created a demand for increased professional knowledge about the issue and for coordination among the many services involved in the response to it. Projects in the Aboriginal community addressed these needs in a variety of ways. For example:

- ◆ The Status of Women Council of the NWT, working with the Women’s Community Action Team, developed seven workshop modules for Northern communities. After cooperatively developing resource material, they worked with community groups to create local training expertise. As a result, communities across the North are now able to offer their own workshops in family violence prevention and intervention.
- ◆ The Western Judicial Education Centre of Vancouver pioneered new content in training programs for judges, to heighten their sensitivity to the cultural dimensions of violence within Aboriginal families.
- ◆ The Aboriginal Social Work and Social Services Educators Network (WUNSKA) of Ottawa undertook a national project to support the teaching of culturally appropriate social work skills by making standardized curriculum modules available to all Canadian schools of social work.
- ◆ The Community Legal Education Association of Manitoba tested methods for developing networks, support groups and training workshops to ensure that an interdisciplinary approach was taken within communities.



## **Walking One's Own Walk: Demonstrations of Culturally Appropriate Services**

From the outset, Initiative funders realized that, to be effective, services must be appropriate to the culture of those being served. The Initiative supported the development of a variety of culturally appropriate models of service provision within Aboriginal communities. Seen collectively, these projects represent a significant part of the beginning of a comprehensive and culturally appropriate response to Aboriginal victims, survivors and abusers. For example:

- ◆ The Mid-Island Tribal Council of Vancouver Island developed a 24-week group program for both men and women that creatively combined individualized life skills training with collective and community healing processes.
- ◆ Native Child and Family Services of Toronto evaluated its successful treatment program for child and adult victims of child sexual abuse and then presented regional workshops to widen the visibility and potential for replication of the model on the national stage.
- ◆ The Helping Spirit Lodge Society in British Columbia developed a treatment program for abusive Aboriginal men and, in coordination with related services, connected it to the broader needs of partners and other family members. As well, a national advisory committee attached to the project was effective in disseminating information about the model nationally.

## Talking One's Own Talk: Meetings and Networks

With so much happening in the course of the Initiative, it quickly became desirable for those involved in these innovative prevention and treatment projects to share their learnings with one another. For example:

- ◆ Waseskun House in Montreal brought together Aboriginal political leadership and service providers from across Canada to begin to develop consensus around approaches to family violence in general and the needs of abusive men in particular.
- ◆ Within the agenda of a national conference that it hosted on Aboriginal child welfare issues, the Assembly of First Nations organized workshops specifically on the topic of child abuse in order to stimulate a constructive dialogue between Band leadership and community members.

## What We Have Gained

What has been gained by these projects funded during the Family Violence Initiative? What do we have now that we did not have before? What does all of this activity tell us about future directions?

The funding of successful projects, involving a variety of stakeholders from across the country, produced more than just a list of "products." These projects created a wealth of material in a wide array of formats: television public service announcements, professional training and public education material, conference proceedings, curriculum outlines, academic and popular articles, and theatrical scripts. This material remains highly relevant to the field. Continuing work is needed to ensure that it is effectively packaged, promoted, disseminated and marketed so that it can be used even more extensively.

These projects, because of their nationally innovative nature and the results they generated, offer insight into future directions for Aboriginal people in addressing the issue of family violence. For example:

- ◆ Some have laid the groundwork for **research on the prevalence of different forms of family violence** and point to a continuing need for rigorous **data collection** and **analysis**.
- ◆ **Culturally appropriate resources for public awareness and education** have met with an enthusiastic response, validating a dramatic need for a wider array of such media.
- ◆ The projects' success in forging **new channels of professional training and sensitization among non-Aboriginal people** is evidenced by the receptivity to this work in the field and of the great potential for even more ambitious initiatives.
- ◆ Effective networking has begun to highlight examples of personal initiative and collective action. Regional and national gatherings reveal a rich vein of learning that can be tapped by **facilitating ongoing interpersonal and inter-organizational connections** across the country. It also points to the need for more systematic maintenance of a variety of networking modalities: Internet mailing lists and e-mail networks, speakers bureaus, practitioners' inventories, advisory committees and national interest groups.
- ◆ During the Initiative, each project developed and tested one or more methodologies for disseminating its findings, its final reports and other

products. The experience of all the projects in this regard underlines the need for **national mechanisms to disseminate information and implement follow-up activity**.

The success of the projects seems especially noteworthy in that it was achieved in spite of:

- the problem being pervasive but largely unexplored within the Aboriginal community,
- little existing research and very few tested service models for this population, and
- relatively inexperienced project staff working within generally new host agencies.

That original reality has changed noticeably even in the intervening years since the inception of these projects. Much more is now known of the causes and dynamics of violence. We now have successful, tested strategies to increase awareness, to train workers and to intervene effectively. We are continuing to test and refine these strategies. Slowly, the infrastructure to deliver these services is being built and staffed by Aboriginal people who are experienced and well-trained practitioners.

## **Standing Still a Moment: Assessing Cultural Appropriateness**

In the review of what has been learned during the Initiative and the consideration of what now needs to follow, few conclusions stand out more clearly than the need to build services that are culturally appropriate to the people who are being served.

During the course of the Family Violence Initiative, there has been increased recognition of the need to ensure that resource materials, approaches to training and the organization of services are culturally appropriate to Aboriginal people. Cultural appropriateness is now accepted as essential to creating effective services for Aboriginal individuals, families and communities.

“Culture” refers to the collective characteristics of a community’s way of life: its perceptions and values, the beliefs and customs – both ritualistic and informal – that flow from them, and the language that expresses them. Culture refers not only to the collective “knowledge” and customs of a group but also to the way that group passes these attributes on from generation to generation.

Culture is reflected in the organizations and institutions of the community. The clearer the reflection by those organizations, the better served the community. When the service, or the organization offering it, does not culturally reflect the community it is meant to serve, an additional stress is created. This does a great disservice to individuals, families and whole communities who are already under considerable stress.

As ownership of family-related services has increasingly passed to Aboriginal control, it has become evident that simply staffing those services with Aboriginal people is only part of the answer. The services themselves need to be designed by Aboriginal people to make them work as a reflection of the culture of the host community and the belief system found there. This redesigning is leading to the development of approaches that Aboriginal people feel are more understandable, comfortable, supportive and, therefore, effective. These approaches or models of service delivery contain a growing body of Aboriginal practice wisdom.

However, culturally matching service to both the servers and the served is not a simple task. Because of increasing globalization, all cultures are under stress and in the process of transformation. Evolution of family structures, gender roles, the significance and function of spirituality, the use of language, and the content of values and norms – all of these changes are trans-

forming the institutions with which and by which we live. It is doubly difficult, in this time of continuing pressure to change, for Aboriginal cultures to reassert their importance and rediscover their inherent dignity after generations of devaluation by dominant cultures.

While cultural appropriateness is one of the most important prerequisites to developing good services, it is also one of the most difficult to assess. What constitutes a good practice in one community will not necessarily transfer well to another. Considering here the practices that have been designed to be culturally appropriate to some Aboriginal people is not meant to imply that they can be applied to all. There are large cultural differences both among Inuit, First Nation and Métis peoples and among individual communities within these larger groupings.

Of the projects funded by the Family Violence Prevention Division, the following table identifies broad characteristics that were felt to be especially reflective of cultural appropriateness. Each characteristic is matched with a resulting practice, highlighting how practice particularities flow from cultural foundations.

This is not a complete or comprehensive listing but is simply a crystallization of aspects from specific, individual projects. It represents a preliminary examination of the effect of cultural appropriateness on the practice design. It can be used as an illustrative template to assist in the development of programs that reflect the cultural characteristics of other communities. Communities interested in designing culturally appropriate services for themselves can use the list as one tool, emphasizing or adding characteristics that reflect their reality and ignoring those that do not.

| Program Characteristics That Reflect <b>Cultural Appropriateness</b>                                                                                         | <b>Resulting Practices</b><br>(in projects funded)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Valuing of Aboriginal <b>tradition and culture</b>                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ resources, approaches and the organization of the services themselves are presented in a way that is deemed by the community to be compatible with Aboriginal culture</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Recognition of the importance of <b>ritual and ceremony</b>                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ appropriate use of rituals and ceremonies within programs</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Valuing the wisdom of those <b>Elders</b> who understand the dynamics of family violence, and a recognition of their role as important carriers of knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ involvement of such Elders in program planning and implementation</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Strong sense of <b>community and shared responsibility</b>                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ an attitude toward privacy and confidentiality, in the context of service delivery, that is different from that found in mainstream services</li> <li>◆ involvement of community in the initial awareness-raising process</li> <li>◆ community-wide commitment to healing as a community</li> <li>◆ community effort toward healing both the abuser and victim at the same time</li> <li>◆ effort to keep abuser in the community while protecting the victim(s)/survivor(s)</li> <li>◆ support for and connection with abusers who have been convicted, given prison sentences and then been taken out of the community, as well as children who are removed from it</li> </ul> |

There is concern about keeping the abuser in the community without first ensuring the safety of the victim. This is a particular concern in communities that are small and isolated or have not taken a strong, united stand against violence. Safe places within the community and safety plans for the victim both need to be in place.

Confidentiality raises a number of seeming contradictions in Aboriginal communities. Because of their size and the inter-relationships of their members, there is a very strong need for the strictest interpretation of confidentiality. At the same time, especially with the inter-relatedness of programs and the staffing of these programs by local people, there is a tendency toward openness. The position put forward by Aboriginal practitioners stresses the imperative that information be shared with others only with the client's consent.

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Program Characteristics That  
Reflect **Cultural Appropriateness**

**Resulting Practices**  
(in projects funded)

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In small communities where a high percentage of people are directly affected by family violence, it is often difficult to separate personal healing from the administration of service. This can be played out in the form of power and control dynamics between, for example, staff and community board members. There is therefore need for healthy people, those committed to their own healing, to be involved in the community by serving on boards of directors. Such boards need training programs, especially ones which allow them to identify and separate issues of policy and administration, leaving the community in charge of policy, and staff in charge of administration. This is one way to address the power and control issues that ironically have such a negative effect on programs meant to empower.

---

An emphasis on **connectedness** (that is, to the land, the family, extended family, clan, family of spouse) – resulting in a view of the individual in context

- ◆ a progression through individually centred programs to those that are conjoint or group or community centred
  - ◆ connection of concurrent programs (for example, a program for batterers, one for survivors and one for children)
  - ◆ recognition of the need to deal with related issues (for example, drug and alcohol abuse and co-dependency)
  - ◆ teaching of practical life skills together with more psycho-social therapeutic interventions
  - ◆ recognition of the need to deal simultaneously with long-term community education issues, especially the education of children
- 

The point regarding the recognition of drug and alcohol abuse issues refers to the need to consider whether this problem is present and needs to be dealt with first, alone, or in connection with other presenting problems.

---

An objective of restoring **balance**

- ◆ the development of related programming that is positive and life enhancing (for example, family recreation in support of therapy)
-

| Program Characteristics That Reflect <b>Cultural Appropriateness</b>      | <b>Resulting Practices</b><br>(in projects funded)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Placing value on <b>nurturing and mutually respectful relationships</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a focus on rebuilding relationships</li> <li>◆ a recognition of the loss of the traditional male role and the unfortunate emergence of a role based on pervasive male dominance</li> <li>◆ a recognition of shame on the part of both the abuser and the victim</li> <li>◆ an importance placed on networking among staff of different programs, even over long distances</li> <li>◆ a collaboration between Aboriginal political leadership and service providers</li> </ul>                                                         |
| An honouring of the central place of <b>women</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a recognition that the role and position of women in Aboriginal communities is changing</li> <li>◆ a concern for the equality of women</li> <li>◆ recognition of the need for women to be central to the decision-making process for program design and delivery</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Acceptance of and respect for the <b>client as a whole person</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ flexible rules and individualized programming where required</li> <li>◆ acceptance of staff-client personal relationships that are supportive to therapeutic intervention (within an understanding of social work ethics)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| A sense of <b>equality</b> between service provider and service recipient | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ client direction in pacing of program</li> <li>◆ importance placed on storytelling as part of therapeutic programming</li> <li>◆ staff attendance at related program events</li> <li>◆ predominance of staff of Aboriginal ancestry</li> <li>◆ use of simple, everyday, jargon-free language</li> <li>◆ use of resource material (posters, pamphlets, etc.) that depict Aboriginal people or symbols</li> <li>◆ use of Aboriginal language</li> <li>◆ staff-client relationships characterized by openness and informality</li> </ul> |



| Program Characteristics That Reflect <b>Cultural Appropriateness</b> | <b>Resulting Practices</b><br>(in projects funded)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A central attitude of <b>caring</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a recognition of the importance of worker wellness and self-care</li> <li>◆ a requirement for healthy, trained staff (that is, people committed to becoming healthy)</li> <li>◆ a focus on support programs and healing strategies for the helper</li> <li>◆ programming that breaks down individual isolation and promotes sharing</li> <li>◆ limited and appropriate self-disclosure of personal experience by staff</li> </ul> |

There is a recognition that many service providers were once victims of abuse and, accordingly, are also on a healing journey. Staff sharing of personal experience related to abuse is encouraged and accepted as a way of assisting program clientele. Accordingly, the purpose of such self-disclosure is to further the healing of the client, not the counsellor. It is also recognized that this requires more professionalism, not less, on the part of the service provider.

|                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A preference for <b>forgiveness</b> rather than judgment and punishment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a tendency to provide time and resources to all members of the family to consider the possibility of forgiveness of the abuser</li> <li>◆ an acceptance of personal responsibility by the abuser as a starting point</li> <li>◆ a recognition of Aboriginal mechanisms for achieving justice (for example, sentencing circles)</li> <li>◆ a recognition of the potential of such justice system mechanisms as the first part of a therapeutic intervention for the abuser</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The tendency to forgiveness should not be confused with any minimized sense of the need for accountability and responsibility by the offender. There is a well-known cycle that involves abusers asking for forgiveness and creating pressure on victims to return to the status quo. This dynamic can be especially strong in small communities. "Forgiveness," as the term is used here, implies that the abuser has accepted responsibility and that expectations and sanctions have been clearly set out by the community.

Because of the importance placed on caring and restoring balance, there appears to be a tendency within Aboriginal justice systems to go beyond questions of guilt and innocence to considerations involving restitution and the reintegration of the offender. As such, these systems can be seen as the beginning of a therapeutic intervention.

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Program Characteristics That  
Reflect **Cultural Appropriateness**

**Resulting Practices**  
(in projects funded)

---

A **holistic connection** of body-mind-spirit

- ◆ program management that values client process as much as staff-defined results
  - ◆ a focus on healing at all levels: individual, family, community, global
  - ◆ a view of program development as unfolding
  - ◆ use of a range of programming, including art therapy
  - ◆ creation of opportunities for grief, anger and acceptance of the need for clientele to go through stages of “denouncing, announcing and going beyond”
  - ◆ understanding of long-term grieving issues
  - ◆ use of the medicine wheel and similar symbols of holistic approaches both within programs and among different programs
- 

The extent of the connection between violence and its effects is still being explored, especially in terms of what this means for program development. For example, many women in the process of seeking assistance with regard to abuse also need to deal with a gambling or bingo addiction. Some practitioners are finding that the key treatment intervention for gambling is grieving, grieving the loss of life or safety or relationship. The point is that the journey is a long, hard and complex one and that the individual will go through a number of programs to reach well-being.

---

## Next Steps: Tomorrow's Opportunities

Since its inception, the Family Violence Prevention Division has used its resources to create needed information (by funding projects) and to disseminate the information developed to those who could use it. While the program no longer has resources to fund extensive project activity, it retains the mandate and the means to continue to share information. Moreover, by partnering with others in this task, it can increase the amount of information shared and widen the audience receiving it.

There are opportunities for the development of a series of complementary, linked national networks to bring key constituencies together. The following are only a few examples that are suggested by a review of project files.

**A Community Facilitator and Senior Practitioner Network** of people who are wise in the ways of creating and offering appropriate and effective service. This network would be available to communities which wish to develop new services or evaluate those they have against proven experience.

**A Research Network** for the development and validation of designs, new work and the analysis of community-generated data. This network would share research designs and reports. Its objective would be to reduce the cost of research, improve designs, create partnerships among communities and researchers, and replicate research between communities where possible and desirable.

**A Training Material and Curriculum Development Network** of adult educators. This network would create standards for resource material and, where appropriate, new material.

**A Production Network** of Aboriginal communications societies to create public awareness, prevention and training materials.

**An Expert Opinion Network** to disseminate specialized knowledge that is difficult for communities to access.

The purpose of all these networks would be:

- to lower the cost of these vital activities by reducing duplication and increasing national collaborative work;
- to increase quality by encouraging collaboration;
- to increase impact by effective dissemination of research findings, training resource materials and information on effective practice models; and

- to connect the resources of these networks directly to Aboriginal communities.

All these potential networks could share common functions:

- regular briefing of Aboriginal leadership on implications of accumulated practice wisdom;
- validation of project designs;
- development of process manuals to encourage the replication of successful models;
- review of material with a view to national adaptability;
- development of nationally usable models;
- improvement of existing models;
- creation of new models based on past experience;
- production of an annual review of new models;
- development of partnerships with other networks;
- increased evaluation of models;
- effective dissemination;
- contribution toward the development of national standards;
- creation of a national capacity to quickly focus on emerging priority issues; and
- exploration of a wide range of funding partnerships, including private sector funding.

It would be vital to connect these networks to those involved in policy and direct service across the country by creating **mutually owned and universally accessible information systems**. This would allow these networks to communicate with one another and with Aboriginal leaders and communities.

It is equally important for communities to talk directly with one another regarding the development and provision of services. To do this would require them to be able to compare information easily. The **development of common reporting protocols** would allow them to create an inexpensive and easily maintained **national inventory of services**.

## Looking Back – Looking Forward

The experience of the Initiative has confirmed that family violence is not simply a social problem. It is a social condition. In the short term, a governmental initiative, no matter how well conceived and carried out, cannot eradicate it or even noticeably lessen its impact. Such an initiative can, however, set the stage for ongoing work. It can pose questions and begin to provide answers. It can point the way to continuing work. The Family Violence Initiative, now concluded, has done this work well. It has set us solidly on the road as we begin a long journey.

There is now a public awareness about the existence and pervasiveness of this condition, its effects on victims and its broad social cost. There is also a growing community of researchers and practitioners and, with them, an expanding amount of research and practice wisdom.

As well, there is now an acceptance of the need for professional systems (for example, criminal justice, health and human service) to be sensitive to new

knowledge about family violence and cultural differences in its manifestations and the appropriate responses to it, and the need for those systems to work together more closely. This has given rise to the development of resource material and training approaches that are both specific to these systems and appropriate to be shared with the wider community. Professional systems are increasingly finding ways to involve the community in an active and ongoing fashion.

Most important, the number of acknowledged survivors is slowly increasing. As victims speak out and begin their own long journey toward healing and well-being, they move from being victims to being survivors, and often to being healers themselves. These numbers will not decrease. The silence will not return.

As Aboriginal communities take ownership of these systems, they are slowly remaking them in their own image, to reflect their own culture and meet their own needs as they define them. Developing the community institutions and support services are among the principal tasks of Aboriginal leaders and communities. These are tasks both exciting and daunting, and ones that will hold the attention of not just this generation but several to follow.

This process is unfolding in a period when resources seem fewer and the need to work together is greater. But

no Aboriginal community is alone in this process. Each faces similar challenges. It can be expected that communities will increasingly turn to one another for help in this work. All the more reason why the building of communication networks to support Aboriginal communities and organizations is critical.

## Appendix I: The 15 Projects

### **Metis National Council Family Violence Needs Assessment**

**Proposal:** This project produced a design for a survey on the extent and nature of family violence among Métis families in Western Canada.

Metis National Council  
350 Sparks Street, Suite 309  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1R 7S8  
Tel: (613) 232-3216  
Fax: (613) 232-4262

### **Television Public Service Announcements on Family Violence**

by the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories: This project researched, developed and produced two one-minute and three 30-second public service announcements to raise awareness about family violence. The announcements were televised on CBC North.

Status of Women Council  
of the Northwest Territories  
P.O. Box 1320  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
X1A 2L9  
Tel: (403) 920-6177  
Fax: (403) 873-0285  
CONTACT: Executive Director

**Family Violence Crisis Intervention Training Program – Naalatsiarlutit**, by Pauktuutit, the Inuit Women's Association of Canada. This project produced a booklet on spousal abuse and its impact on women and their families, and distributed it to every Inuit community in Canada.

Pauktuutit, Inuit Women's Association  
192 Bank Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2P 1W8  
Tel: (613) 238-3977  
Fax: (613) 238-1787  
CONTACT: Special Project Coordinator

**Aboriginal Family Violence Conference: "Communities in Crisis – Healing Ourselves,"** by Waseskun House, Montreal. This national conference served as a more concentrated follow-up to a family violence workshop that focused on Aboriginal men who abuse their wives and children.

Waseskun House  
3601 St-Jacques West, Suite 340  
Montreal, Quebec  
H4C 3N4  
Tel: (514) 932-4634  
Fax: (514) 932-8454

**Second National Aboriginal Child Welfare Conference**, by the Assembly of First Nations. Aboriginal leaders in the field of family violence came to Winnipeg to lead a conference workshop addressing child abuse and the

relationship between child welfare and child abuse in Aboriginal communities.

Assembly of First Nations  
Child Welfare Liaison  
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 1002  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 7B7  
Tel: (613) 241-6789  
Fax: (613) 241-5808

**Aboriginal Family Violence and Social Work Education Project**, by the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. This project developed curricula within schools of social work across Canada to sensitize social work students to the nature and extent of violence in Aboriginal families and train them for intervention to address it.

Canadian Association of  
Schools of Social Work  
323 Chapel Street, 2nd Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 7Z2  
Tel: (613) 236-3424  
Fax: (613) 237-5969

**Western Workshop – 1991**, by the Western Judicial Education Centre, Vancouver. This was the second in a series of judicial education events for provincial and territorial court judges in Western and Northern Canada, with emphasis on the justice system's service to Aboriginal people, raising the consciousness of judges about the social context in which judicial decision making takes place. A training manual

and videotapes were produced and distributed to judges across Canada.

The project was originally sponsored by the Western Judicial Education Centre. The Centre has since ceased to exist. The resource materials and video are available for consultation and/or inter-library loan from the Departmental Library, Health Canada, Ottawa K1A 0K9.

**1992 Seminar on Race and Ethnic Relations**, by the Western Judicial Education Centre, Vancouver. This training event produced a training manual and videotapes that focused on ethnic and cultural equity, with significant focus on Aboriginal peoples.

The project was originally sponsored by the Western Judicial Education Centre. The Centre has since ceased to exist. The resource materials and video are available for consultation and/or inter-library loan from the Departmental Library, Health Canada, Ottawa K1A 0K9.

**Legal Education Program on Family Violence**, by the Community Legal Education Association (CLEA) of Manitoba. A legal information program was produced to assist people who come into contact with the legal system, with special emphasis on the needs of women, Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities in the context of family violence. Workshops were held in rural Aboriginal communities



and information kits were produced and distributed.

Community Legal Education Association  
294 Portage Avenue, Suite 510  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 0B9  
Tel: (204) 943-2382  
Fax: (204) 943-3600  
CONTACT: Alan Diduck

**“Out of the Silence” – A Power Play Addressing Family Violence**, by Headlines Theatre Company. This project prepared and presented a “Power Play” on the topic of violence in urban Aboriginal families, stimulating audience participation in the performance and thereby public involvement in the issue.

Urban Representative Body  
of Aboriginal Nations Society  
1416 Commercial Drive, Suite 101  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V5L 3X9  
Tel: (604) 251-2006  
Fax: (604) 251-4104

**Women’s Community Action Book**, by the Women’s Community Action Team, Yellowknife. In cooperation with the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories, the Team produced a training handbook and facilitator’s guide to help women organize workshops on family violence in NWT communities.

Women’s Community Action Team  
c/o Status of Women Council  
of the NWT  
Box 1320  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
X1A 2L9  
Tel: (403) 920-8030  
Fax: (403) 873-0285

**Evaluation of the Aboriginal Spousal Assault Program**, by the Helping Spirit Lodge Society of Vancouver. This project implemented and evaluated a three-year demonstration program for the group treatment and healing of Aboriginal men who were abusive to their partners. A treatment manual was produced and distributed.

Helping Spirit Lodge Society  
3965 Dumfries Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V5N 5R3  
Tel: (604) 872-6649  
Fax: (604) 873-4402  
CONTACT: Ms. Bernie Whiteford

**Mooka’am Sexual Abuse Treatment Program: Program Description and Planning Guidelines**, by the Native Child and Family Services of Toronto. This project comprised the second phase of a two-phase project, involving a qualitative impact evaluation among the clientele of the treatment program for Aboriginal child and adult victims of child sexual abuse. To support dissemination of information about the program, workshops were held in Toronto and Vancouver.

Native Child and Family Services  
of Toronto  
464 Yonge Street, Suite 201  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4Y 1W9  
Tel: (416) 969-8510  
Fax: (416) 969-9251  
CONTACT: Kenn Richard,  
Executive Director

**Mid-Island Tribal Council Family  
Violence Demonstration Project  
Final Evaluation**, by the Mid-Island  
Tribal Council in British Columbia.  
This three-year demonstration project  
developed and evaluated an innovative  
treatment and healing program for  
victims, abusers and their families,  
combining life skills training with  
group treatment and community  
involvement. A program manual  
was produced and distributed.

Mid-Island Tribal Council  
P.O. Box 1000  
Duncan, British Columbia  
B9L 3Y2  
Tel: (250) 746-9941  
Fax: (250) 746-9961

**Elder Abuse Program Proposal**, by  
the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto.  
This constituted phase one of a national  
project to develop culturally appro-  
priate prevention resources regarding  
senior abuse among off-reserve  
Aboriginal people, laying the ground-  
work for resource production by means  
of a national consultation, the  
organizing of a national advisory  
committee, and the production of a  
proposal for actual resources to be  
developed.

Native Canadian Centre of Toronto  
16 Spadina Road  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5R 2S7  
Tel: (416) 964-9087  
Fax: (416) 964-2111  
CONTACT: Gayle Mason,  
Executive Director

## **Appendix II: Participants Who Reviewed the Material on Culturally Appropriate Practice**

|                              |                                           |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Kathy Absolon                | University of Victoria                    |
| Martha Argue                 | Status of Women Council of The NWT        |
| Christopher Armstrong-Esther | University of Lethbridge                  |
| Anne Charter                 | University of Manitoba                    |
| David Diamond                | Headlines Theatre Company                 |
| Guy Freedman                 | Health Canada                             |
| Michael Hart                 | University of Manitoba                    |
| Maggie Hodgson               | Nechi Institute                           |
| Yvonne Howse                 | Saskatchewan Indian Federated College     |
| Diane Kinnon                 | Consultant                                |
| Emma Larocque                | University of Manitoba                    |
| Margaret Mitchell            | Department of Indian and Northern Affairs |
| Bill Mussell                 | Sal'i'shan Institute                      |
| Tracy O'Hearn                | Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association      |
| Joan Pennell                 | Memorial University of Newfoundland       |
| Sharon Perrault              | Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre               |
| Liz Roberts                  | Canadian Public Health Association        |
| Daniel Ryan                  | Congress of Aboriginal People             |
| Paul Sonnichson              | Justice Canada                            |
| Jim Taylor                   | Inuit Taparizat of Canada                 |