

**FAMILY VIOLENCE IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES:
The Missing Peace**

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The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
by
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with the assistance
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PREFACE

THE MISSING PEACE

Members of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples have facilitated public discourse on a wide range of social problems. Of these social problems, few are as debilitating as family violence. From all accounts, family violence is a complex, multifaceted and wide-spread social problem in many aboriginal communities.

After hearing numerous heartbreaking stories from the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people alike, it is believed now that peace has not been, nor is it, forthcoming for most aboriginal peoples. As their families bear the brunt of an unredeemed past and present, a special challenge of helping them find peace emerges. A future must be charted which is not a mere repetition of what they have already toiled heavily against. Knowing the general status of aboriginal families is the first step towards coming to terms with family violence. For instance, we know many aboriginal families have lost their ability to act as mediating structuresⁱ. Further, because they are in the midst of existing problems, they are no longer able to provide their members safe refuge from life's stresses. Being under seige, they do not have the energy and confidence for renewal. All of this because the sacredness of the aboriginal family has given way to escalating and destructive violence.

The fact that the aboriginal family has been weakened to the extent that it now poses a barrier to human development is a terrible twist of irony. Yet, many voices have framed this paradox. What most aboriginal persons previously thought impossible has now become the focus of social change. Their smallest and dearest social unit is troubled and in the need of healing. However, a remedial course where peace is commonplace will unfold within this paper. What will be shown is that more radical and critical approachesⁱⁱ to controlling and/or ending family violence are required. In light of this task, the paper will look at the stories of both victims, victors and kindred spirits, for in these stories lie directions for the future.

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A. ABORIGINAL VOICES: THE MISSING PIECE

I. MAPPING OUT FAMILY VIOLENCE IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES:

Looking at family violence is like driving in uncharted territory. The great expanse of the problem, the broken bones and spirits and the pockets of hope lay scattered. But, it is hard to get an overall impression of the situation or to know where to go with it at any given time. This was the message that was given to the Commissioners by those who were trying to make sense of this social ill.

To come to terms with family violence then, it is important to introduce some of the major issues aboriginal peoples raised. It is useful, as well, to include some essential background facts to these issues. Seeing the issues through the same lens and filter as aboriginal peoples is vital. For although people are affected by family violence, they also have the capacity to modify it. To round out the framework for examining family violence, it is important to note that there is a strong connection between its features and how it is treated and managed.

WOMEN DISCLOSE AND OPPOSE THE PROBLEM:

In an earlier R.C.A.P report entitled: Focusing the Dialogue, aboriginal women raised family violence as an issue of great import. Almost in the same breath, they voiced strong angst about their place in male-dominated governing systemsⁱⁱⁱ.

However, even before this Commission came into existence, aboriginal women were protesting against the net effects of violence in all its forms. With a collective will, they made a commitment to do away with this social scourge. They did so by promoting a candid dialogue about the problem. In doing so, they assumed a leadership role in fiercely contesting its social and human consequences.

In 1991, the Native Women's Association of Canada recommended that a task force on family violence in aboriginal communities be set up by the federal government^{iv}. Other women's organizations also took up the cause. From central Canada, L'Association des Femmes Autochtones du Quebec stated:

We must fight violence; it is part of our everyday lives and it is destroying many of us. It has become a major concern among the members of our association. We can no longer allow violence to tear apart our families and jeopardize the future of our children. Everyone is directly or indirectly affected by this problem, and no one can overlook it.^v

The Ontario Native Women's Association produced a landmark document in 1989, called Breaking Free. It showed "the alarming extent of violence within aboriginal communities and highlighted the pressing need for the issue to be addressed."^{vi} Inuit women also bravely broke the silence about child sexual abuse in their communities.^{vii} In the face of almost daily pain and in a desperate call to action, Métis women, too, went public about domestic terrorism.^{viii}

This new openness about family violence has helped to unite women against a common enemy. Together, they have brought special attention to violence and abuse aimed at children and themselves. They have done so steadily and creatively, each in their own way.

Not all aboriginal women are able to participate in open, hard-hitting protests. In many ways, larger movements are too far removed from the ordinary women to be of direct benefit to them. There are also more practical reasons why most women are unable to take part in broader forms of protest. They lack the necessary resources, time and transportation. Often, possessive partners keep them close to home and work, thereby isolating them. In addition, cultural and language barriers prohibit their involvement, as do child-bearing and nurturing responsibilities. The chronic burden of disease and family violence itself also keeps them in the margins. Taken all together, these factors help to drive women's resistance underground.

Just because most aboriginal women are unable to participate in broader resistance opportunities, does not preclude their resistance to violence. They simply resort to daily acts of defiance. They do so anonymously, in isolation and often, in the privacy of their own homes. An angry mother boiling beer bottles to make a stew for a hungry family^{ix} is a case in point. By "shacking up", Métis women avoid potentially violent relationships.^x Resisting violence at another level, a young Inuk woman, now a national leader, literally fought to keep her long hair during the infamous relocation of the Inuit to Grise Fiord.^{xi} Other aboriginal women take advantage of their own human agency and through dance, gossip and art they make it possible to move beyond the limits of family violence.

Some aboriginal women faced with daily abuse fight back; others snap under the pressure as the following testimony illustrates:

We need to pay some attention to the security of our female population. Today in this country our women make up 25 per cent of the federal prison system. Their crimes have been violent crimes. I mean murder and violent assault. And they have told us why they committed these crimes. Many were victims of incest. Many were victims of sexual assault. Many were physically abused as children.

They were pushed to the wall and they responded with violence. Do you hear our men talking of violence against our women? Do you hear our men talking about incest? What is being done in our communities about gang rapes? We are suffering in silence.

Sharon McIvor, Spokesperson
Native Women's Association of Canada
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT.
92-06-26:51

In sum, it is clear that aboriginal women bear the burden of the social discord occurring in aboriginal communities. They are caught in a never-ending struggle to take back the space that has traditionally been theirs in the family and community. They are struggling to restore the social balance therein.

NUMBERS AND STORIES SHOW A NEED FOR CHANGE:

Looking at the problem of family violence in aboriginal communities, it is important to consider the hard data on violence. However, to fully appreciate the destructive force family violence wields, aboriginal voices must tell "how it is". Stories about children is always a good place to begin.

For many children, family violence is a fact of life. First-hand experiences with abuse, alcoholism and violence are so great that few children grow up unscathed.^{xii} This speaks volumes about the danger of normalizing high-risk behaviour in aboriginal communities. It also helps to explain how family violence can span generations. In the case of inner city aboriginal

people, breaking the cycle means changing childhood conditions but it also requires promoting social and economic changes for the adults who survive these conditions.^{xiii} These options pose a special challenge for the Inuit who, with the highest birth rate of any Canadian population, face grinding poverty, poor housing, family violence and high unemployment and drop-out rates from school.^{xiv} Even though exact numbers are not available on the incidence of family violence among the Métis, it is argued that they suffer as much from it as their cultural relatives on reserves.^{xv}

To get a sense of what this suggests in terms of numbers, the results of a study that was done in Lethbridge, Alberta, of 61 women who were recruited through native-specific agencies will be drawn upon. It reads:

When asked about their personal lives, 91% of the respondents said they had personal experience with family violence. While these women identify psychological and verbal abuse as the most common, (ranging from blaming at 88%, to swearing at 82%) a significant number had also been subjected to slapping (77%) hitting (64%) and punching (54%). Sixteen percent reported being touched unwillingly and being forced into sex with partners.^{xvi}

In a recent Canada-wide study on violence against women, the following figures about aboriginal women were gathered:

A study by the Ontario Native Women's Association found that eight out of 10 Aboriginal women had personally experienced violence. Of these women, 87 percent had been injured physically and 57 percent had been sexually abused.

According to a London, Ontario area study, 71 percent of the urban sample and 48 percent of the reserve sample of Oneida women had experienced assault at the hands of current or past partners.

It is estimated that between 75 and 90 percent of the women in some northern Aboriginal communities are battered.

A Northwest Territories survey found that 80 percent of girls and 50 percent under 8 years old were sexually abused.^{xvii}

According to the Canadian Institute on Child Health's (C.I.C.H.) The Health of Canada's Children, they reveal that "40% of all aboriginal peoples identify family violence as an important

problem in their community and 25% see sexual abuse as a problem."^{xviii} The Institute provides an invaluable graph to show the extent to which aboriginal peoples see social issues as a problem. This graph appears below:

**Statistics Canada, Language, Tradition, Health, Lifestyle and Social Issues,
1991 Aboriginal Peoples's Survey, 1993**

Although, it is vitally important to get a handle on the prevalence of family violence, it is important not to be so narrow in our thinking. To do so would be to ignore violence driven by hate. Tensions between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people worsen when racism rears its ugly head.

Racism is a form of violence that is hard to pinpoint, yet, it is everywhere. Concern with race as a concept has not been given as much attention as cultural issues by aboriginal people, yet they have spoken openly about their intimate history with it during the hearings. Society's intolerance for aboriginal peoples' biological and social difference imprisoned them in residential schools. Being brown skinned and "poor" made them prime candidates for such "civilizing" efforts. Unequal power relations forced them to re-locate to strange parts of the country. Their world views were seen as superstitious. Their languages were attacked and their cultures and values belittled.

Aboriginal peoples have recounted stories of racially motivated incidents they have experienced in their daily lives. In her presentation, Donna Sears, from the Atenlos Women's Group, showed how racism intersects with sexism to create multiple burdens for aboriginal women. To quote:

The portrayal of the squaw is one of the degrading, more despised and most dehumanizing anywhere in the world. The squaw is the female counterpart of the Indian male savage and , as such, she has no human face. She is lustful, immoral, unfeeling and dirty. It is this grotesque dehumanization that has rendered all native women and girls vulnerable to gross physical, psychological and sexual violence.

I believe there is a direct relationship between these horrible racist, sexist stereotypes and violence against native women and girls.

I believe, for example, that Helen Betty Osborne was murdered in 1972 by four young men because these youths grew up with twisted notions of Indian girls as squaws. Racist and sexist stereotypes not only hurt Aboriginal women and their sense of self-esteem, but actually encourage abuse, both by Aboriginal men and others. Our family violence programs attempt to help both victims and offenders to see beyond the stereotypes.

Donna Sears
Atenlos Women's Group
Royal Commission Public Hearings
London, ONT
93-05-12

Kathy First Rider discussed, in graphic terms, how racism can spill over to physical inhuman consequences. She stated:

I don't think we are ever going to rid of racism, although it really hurts. It hurts us so much that it would drive us back on the street. I would defend any Indian against the racist remarks, the prejudice. I even witnessed one here in the city of Lethbridge. This old man was just about passing out, and these white boys came along and they busted his jaw, they just kicked him. I reported it to the police because I thought that was a total injustice. It was not because he was drunk and on his knees; it was because he was an Indian. I would do that for every one of them.

Kathy First Rider
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Lethbridge, ALTA
93-05-25:92

The fact that the State has often condoned structural violence through its own racist policies and practices is not lost on many subjects. Harold Orton, for example, described one of the legacy's of the Oka incident as follows:

Look what happened at Oka. Our people got stoned down going down the highway just trying to get safety. It still really hasn't done much good because now they are going to be fighting again. The government is pushing and pushing and pushing

us, and they don't realize that there is a breaking point and that breaking point comes in the form of violence. And we can't have that.

Harold Orton
Community Care Centre for Substance Abuse
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Orillia, ONT
93-05-13

If aboriginal peoples' brush with racism causes grief, the joint blow of religion and violence proves to be even more so. Frequently they have experienced the betrayal of trusted religious leaders. Organized religion has fallen out of favour for this reason and because it has inflicted its own forms of violence on the people. Religious concepts, values and beliefs have created the "right way" for aboriginal peoples, often resulting in the neglect of their spirituality. Organized religions and churches have, in many cases, continued to act as centres of power and control in aboriginal communities. While churches can exercise positive influence on individuals and community life, one would be remiss if one turned a blind eye to the fact that they can act as a locus of community abuse. Religions can set-back thinking and action on social issues^{xix} like family violence. One report that was submitted to the Commission supporting this argument. To quote:

Christian churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church (which has played a dominant role in most Dene communities), are patriarchal in structure. The churches reinforce a subservient role for women and the traditional Dene belief in life-long marriage arrangements. Aboriginal women participating in a Yellowknife focus group explained that women brought up in convents or hostels were taught to respect the institution of marriage, accept abuse and look for a better day tomorrow. In the words of one woman, "I was forced to get married because I was pregnant. I always thought the relationship might get better as time went on but the violence got worse. I didn't know what to look forward to when my husband got home. We always had food but there was always lots of mental and physical abuse."

Churches and residential school have had a role in promoting silence about sexual abuse and sexual assault, whether it occurred in school or elsewhere. As one woman said, in the old days there was little discussion about sexual abuse because people were taught in the mission that anything sexual was dirty. The effects of this silence is still being felt today.

In individual interviews the church and school are blamed for beginning a cycle of dysfunctional families, for "putting garbage in your brain," and not teaching kids

about the dangers of alcohol and drugs. Churches have taken some action, such as sponsoring the recent gathering of former students of Turquetil Hall hostel in Chesterfield Inlet. However, agency representatives suggest that churches are condoning family violence and abuse by their silence on the issue, and the absence of any programs to prevent or address it. It is significant that participants in the study seldom seek help from a priest or paster after a violent or abusive incident,

according to the individual interviews. Still, individuals in Lutsel K'e suggest that churches have a role and should be involved in stopping the violence.

Damaged and Needing Help: Violence And Abuse in Aboriginal Families
in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e, Draft Final Report
Dr. Cynthia Chambers, Lois Little, Aggie Brockman,
Alizette Abel, Bertha Catholique
Sept. 15, 1993 p.3

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE RE-DEFINE FAMILY VIOLENCE

Aboriginal peoples have told many stories about how structural or systemic violence in the form of colonialism, racism, economic disenfranchisement, cultural and spiritual invasion has embossed itself on the psyche of aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal people have been shaped by this violence and unfortunately, in the process, they have become its heirs.

A situation where this violence has been turned inward is emerging. Aboriginal people are now striking out at their own in growing incidents of brown-upon-brown violence. Roy Fabian, a Dene from Hay River, N.W.T. spoke about this sad development.

When you are talking about oppression, there is a process that goes on. [First] there is a process that demeans us, that belittles us and makes us believe that we are not worthy, and the oppressed begin to develop what they call cultural self-shame and cultural self-hate, which results in a lot of frustration and a lot of anger. At the same time this is going on, because our ways are put down as Native people, because our cultural values and things are put down, we begin to adopt our oppressors' values and, in a way, we become oppressors [of] ourselves...Because of the resulting self-hate and self-shame we begin to start hurting our own people [and ourselves].

When you talk about things like addiction and family abuse, elder abuse, sexual abuse, jealousy, gossip, suicide and all the different forms of abuses we seem to be experiencing, it's all based on [the original] violence. Its all a form of

[internalized] violence. [Churches and governments] made us believe that the way we are today is the Dene way. It isn't. That is no Dene culture...

Roy Fabian
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Hay River, N.W.T.
93-06-17

Communal violence^{xx}, where one segment of the population attempts to limit the rights of others, is born of structural violence but, it feeds upon the political, ethnic, economic and spiritual differences now inherent in many aboriginal communities. Where once aboriginal societies were markedly homogeneous, bound by custom and tradition, they have now been "organized into competing clans, classes, reserves and other interest groups."^{xxi}

Alma Brooks and Freda Lundmark talked of the political factionalism that has served to divide entire aboriginal communities. They stated:

But as long as there's division and I've watched divisions. I've noticed them in my lifetime, in my involvement. I've watched us go from a nation and be divided into helpless, powerless little communities that call themselves nations, First Nations. Well there's a lot of division... There's a lot of political divisions among the aboriginal organizations here.

Alma Brooks, Maliseet
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Kingsclear, NB
92-05-19

There is no recreation services or almost no recreation services for the Métis in Cross Lake. The arena was built on Métis Provincial Crown Land, not the reserve [which] is not allowing the Métis to have "wet socials" and they are trying to control the activities within the community boundary. The recreation worker on the community side has the support of his co-workers, the other recreation workers, but quite often the activities he or she plans are cancelled due to political interference from the Band side.

Freda Lundmark
Métis Women of Manitoba
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Cross Lake, Man.
93-05-31:21

Regrettably, untethered political disagreements can spill over into physical violence as one witness noted:

This has lead to occupations of the Westbank Indian Band offices, and on one occasion security was hired. The security people were instructed not to allow members of the Westbank Band or an Okanagan member to enter the building. The mood was very volatile and almost erupted into a violent confrontation between Band members and the security guards. This was brought about by a security guard taking a swing at one of our female Band members and, in doing so, broke her glasses and gave her a black eye. It was fortunate that cooler heads prevailed and the organizers took the initiative to alleviate the situation. On another occasion, the same security guards tried to intimidate a Band member. Once again, the failure to address the legitimate concerns of the membership were at the root of these violent situations. They will only increase unless something is done.

Tom Lindley
Westbank Indian Band
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Kelowna, BC
93-06-17

Other, recent incidents where ethnicity has been factored into the communal violence equation have been disclosed. In one instance, a young girl was harassed by others in her community because of her "white" ancestry. In another a male contender for a leadership position in Kahnawake was prevented from running in a local election because his blood quantum level was determined to be 48%, versus the required 50%^{xxii}. While ethnic pride is important to the survival of aboriginal communities, ethnic nationalism can build its own tyranny. In its extreme form, it can result in ethnic cleansing, previously unheard of in aboriginal communities. This is a dangerous, worrisome development and one with which all aboriginal peoples should be concerned.

Aboriginal self-government emerged is a rallying point for many aboriginal groups. While it holds great promise for local control^{xxiii}, many aboriginal peoples voiced ambivalent feelings regarding the prospect of self-government. Most aboriginal peoples want self-government because they see it as half of the solution to their under-development problems (the other half being a return to traditionalism). Many others view the advent of self-government with trepidation because they have seen the excesses of the aboriginal political elite and have suffered from their exclusionary practices.

Aboriginal leaders can impose their own forms of structural and communal violence. While aboriginal leaders strive to personify themselves as the vanguard of reserve communities and the stewards of their development, the common aboriginal person can experience certain struggles in their thrust toward participatory development^{xxiv}, not the least of which is the inadequacies of aboriginal leadership.

Documentation which substantiate these incidents are included in our submission. All these acts of retaliation are forms of violence against Métis women, emotional, financial and political abuse. Interesting, women are not the only Métis being excluded from representative group in Alberta. My uncle, who spent 25 years working for Métis people in Alberta, had his membership revoked. He passed away two years ago with a broken heart, which resulted from the elitist manouverings of this so-called representative organization.

The power that is bestowed upon these non-profit organizations is being abused and this results in what amounts to dictatorships.

Marge Friedel
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Edmonton, ALTA.
92-06-11

All of us have heard aboriginal leaders affirm that: "Our children are our future." While this is a positive assertion, the stark realities in many aboriginal communities can diminish this statement to mere rhetoric. Aboriginal youth want aboriginal leaders to move beyond platitudes and back-up their statements with tangible demonstrations of their beliefs. The words of Raymond LaLiberte and Michelle Harding who presented at the La Ronge hearing echo this sentiment:

Emergency kid shelters have to be encouraged, child havens, because it is not their situation. We were talking about family violence this morning. It's not their fault. We can't blame the victims. We have to take care of them. I think I would like my tax dollars to go towards something that is as constructive as that.

All the above things that I've mentioned and the few that I haven't mentioned are things like suicide, AIDS, sex abuse, cultural development, psychological training, self-image, self-esteem, recreation, et cetera, whenever we talk about youth everybody says give them some recreation program, you will pacify them and you'll get them out of your hair. He'll go and play. I think we want to part of the mainstream. We are the future leaders. Leaders are not born automatically to become leaders. They are trained. It's a long, drawn out process, so the adult population has to respect the fact that we require training and they have to put us under their wing and they've got to protect us until we become leaders and we are prepared to go out into the mainstream society to make some political statement or to become future leaders in economic development or social development.

Raymond LaLiberte
Royal Commission Public Hearings
La Ronge, SASK
92-05-28

There are many areas that contribute to the need for this facility; family violence, alcohol, sexual abuse, poverty, et cetera. We no longer can have band-aid solutions. Our children are our future.

Michelle Harding
Area Representative
Métis Women of Saskatchewan
Royal Commission Public Hearings
La Ronge, SASK
92-05-28:37

Homeless spirits plague aboriginal youth. Much has been written about their hunger for culture, identity and future. Unfortunately, many begin life's journey as throw away children with wasted lives having no value in the context of human society.^{xxv} An elder described this in the following terms:

I have been to the Correctional Centre in Prince Albert twice and I am sure a lot of you people know the majority of kids in the place are natives. Twice I have been there and once I saw two little white guys and the rest were natives. And it really hurt my feelings to think that so many people don't care what happens to their children. When they are out of the house, they are on their own. Nobody tries to

find out what is going on. They just do as they please and they get into trouble. And who is that to stand by them. They send them out to the correctional centres and when they come out they rebel to these things. They don't think they should be in that place but they are in that place because nobody seems to care what happens to them.

Harriet Arcand, Elder
Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan
Royal Commission Public Hearings
North Battleford, SASK
92-10-29:192

Much of the testimony and briefs presented refer to aboriginal women and children as a vulnerable unit within the aboriginal community. Statistics in the second edition of The Health of Canada's Children (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 1994) place the rates of single parent Indian and Inuit families at an all time high. It, for example, states that "[A]t least 19% of Indian and Inuit families are headed by a single parent. At least 14% of all Indian and Inuit families are headed by women. Thirty percent of all Indian families living off reserve are headed by a single parent."^{xxvi} Further, the Institute noted that 24% of Indian families living on reserve are lone parents while statistics on Métis families were not available.

Whereas, there is a lack of documented statistics on victimization rates amongst one parent families, a lack of financial resources can lead to other forms of abuse as the following testimonial asserts:

Single mothers are subjected to all avenues of abuses by landlords in order to give favours if rent is not paid for on time. Substance abuse is high in these low rental areas. Younger generations are exposed constantly to these abuses. CMHC has made it known that there will be no allocation of subsidized rental units in the lower mainland.

Ben Stewart
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Terrace, BC
93-05-25:74

Women and children as a unit are most vulnerable to abuse, particularly during pregnancy. The conditions under which single mothers live and their chosen lifestyle can lead to the potential abuse of the yet-not-born. The study Damaged and Needing Help states:

Given the extent of alcohol abuse, professionals express concern about the number of Fetal Alcohol Affected people and people with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Part of FAS and FAE is an impaired ability to distinguish from right and wrong. Currently, there are few resources for diagnosing FAE and no special programs for those who are diagnosed.

Damaged and Needing Help:
Violence And Abuse in Aboriginal Families in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e
Draft Final Report, Chambers, Dr. Cynthia, Lois Little,
Aggie Brockman, Alizette Abel, Bertha Catholique
Sept. 15, 1993

Ms. Sharon Caudron describes how family violence affects aboriginal children:

Family violence is seen as the most rampant social problem of our time. It is probably the most expensive. The costs in terms of human suffering cannot be measured. The cost in dollars can only be guessed at.

Our children are vastly affected by family violence even when they are not the direct victims. The cost to our children is hidden in their inability to be attentive in school, in feelings of insecurity and low-esteem, and in acting out behaviour which may manifest itself in many ways, such as vandalism, self-abuse, bullying and often these children suffer in silence.

Ms. Sharon Caudron, Program Director
Women's Resource Centre of Hay River
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Hay River, NWT
93-06-17:110

Old age is another time when family violence can exact a toll. Some elderly aboriginal people suffer the indignity of neglect and abuse at the hands of those closest to them. This extremely sad development in the very communities, claiming to hold the elderly in such high regard, is at first glance incomprehensible until it becomes clear how many have devalued their traditional commitment to others.^{xxvii}

Elder abuse may be constituted as financial exploitation and repression^{xxviii} but, it may also involve coerced activities like babysitting, rape, physical, emotional and verbal abuse.^{xxix}

Angela Jones laments the manipulation of elders when she states:

There is a lot of Elder abuse. When you live on a reserve, you work your farm all your life and then you get our old-age pension. Usually your farm will go to your children. A lot of times some of your relatives will manipulate you. You sign your farm over to them, and they promise to do this and that for your but, after the transfer is done, you don't even seem them any more. A non-Indian looks forward to retiring from their farm and selling it and taking that long-awaited trip they always wanted to take, but for a lot of us Natives that doesn't happen.

Angela Jones
British Columbia Native Women's Society
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Prince George, BC
93-06-17

Elder abuse may also take the form of benign neglect. In an Inuk elder's words:

I have also seen especially as to Elders as to how really, really tired they are. When you are an Inuk who are with them and you see them, they are really tired and they have no place to go where they can be assisted. They can't even find anyone that they can talk to. I can see a picture that maybe this can be given to maybe Hamlet Council and be discussed.

Rhoda Karetak
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Rankin Inlet, NWT
92-11-19:35

Homosexuality can also be a factor in communal or family violence in aboriginal communities. As yet, it is not well tolerated or openly discussed in most communities. This intolerance makes the lives of many aboriginal homosexuals difficult as one presenter testified:

The other young brother -- and this is a realistic life experience that I had a couple of weeks ago when I was in Vancouver -- this other young brother who is 25 years old and has AIDS now. He too was abused, raped and separated from his family when he was three-years old. He had witnessed seven murders when he was a child, in his youth. He has this virus now eight years, since he was 18 years old. I have asked him, besides a wish for life, what would he like? His response, my mother.

Ken Ward
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Edmonton, ALTA
92-06-11:129

If, as in the larger First Nations community, two spirited people suffer from suicide, substance abuse and short life spans, then we must recognize this as a symptom...

Susan Beaver, President
2-Spirited People of the First Nations
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT
92-06-25:159

While open reference to sexual orientation is not forthcoming and even, in aboriginal discourse, a large number of representations on behalf of disabled aboriginal persons are evident in the hearings. Four separate testimonials underscored the prevalence of abuse against disabled peoples.

Isabelle Smith testified:

There is a lot of abuse taking place also within native disabled people. A lot of it is dealt with: family abuse, sexual abuse, incest abuse. And without somebody like me who can go out there and investigate this, there is nothing that can be done for those people to get help.

Isabelle Smith, Disability Counsellor
Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre
Royal Commission Public Hearings
92-10-27

Two other witnesses noted:

So I would just like to say that it would be our pleasure to work with you, as far as Aboriginal people with disabilities, because we are less recognized and the most violated against by both races, both sexes, and both communities. We are raped by disabled men; we are raped by disabled women; we are raped by aboriginal women; we are raped by aboriginal men; we are raped by white women; we are raped by white men, and believe you me we have been raped by our medical attendants, doctors, nurses, occupational therapists -- you name it, we've had it. We know what it is like to be down low, but for God's sake you don't have to keep us there either.

Judi Johnny
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Whitehorse, YK
92-11-18:488

We cannot have our own justice system unless we heal our people first. We cannot have people on justice committees who will not deal with spousal assault and sexual abuse because they haven't dealt with these problems themselves. The example that I give is that in Polytech just recently, they have a justice committee there. There were five men up on charges of sexually abusing a 13-year old mentally handicapped girl and the justice committee recommended to the judge that they receive one day in jail, because the men should not be taken from their community because the community would suffer. But yet they took this 13-year old girl out of her community away from her support systems and they took her to Inuvik so she could have counselling.

Reana Erasmus
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Yellowknife, NWT
92-12-07:123

Mr. Bob Walker also reported:

Abuse is an issue for people with disabilities. We know that from our research that certainly because of their vulnerability people who have disabilities are often victimized and if I can provide an example there was a case recently in the Northwest Territories where a young woman with a mental handicap was raped repeated by men in her community. When the case was taken to court the judge threw the case out of court saying that the woman was incompetent to present evidence on her own behalf. Those are the sort of barriers that we would like to work towards taking down.

Mr. Bob Walker
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT
93-06-02:50

A number of community people testified how those with mental impairments are extremely vulnerable to abuse.

It seems like a lot issues have been brought up, and we have just had disability. One thing that I have been trying to find more information and help with is the mentally disabled. There is never any talk about that. Even in our native society, they aren't even protected. There are no laws to protect them against sexual abuse or sexual assault.

Katherina Palmer
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Victoria, BC
92-05-22:291

My daughter was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1985. She became pregnant due to sexual abuse while she lived on...

Evelyn Schrieber
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Sault Ste. Marie, ONT
92-06-11:348

I have seen some of the children from abused homes and some of their scares are very, very deep, so that when they become adults they will have serious psychiatric problems. There is not much we can do once the damage is done for some of these children, especially when one lives in an isolated area, there are no professions there and certainly even fewer that speak the Native language to support these children, to understand what has happened to them, and to work through their problems.

Heather Clements
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT
92-11-03:180

We need more awareness of FAS and FAE. In Aboriginal communities there is a lot of awareness about AIDS, alcohol addiction and family violence, but we seem to have forgotten this area, and we don't seem to want to acknowledge consequences of complex situations.

Betsy Jackson
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Whitehorse, YK
92-11-18:147

We need to emphasize the poor judgment and the inability to predict consequences or to learn from events. We also need education about the multiple effects of FAS/FAE, including physical and sexual abuse and attachment issues. Children that are affected by FAS/FAE are very vulnerable to be physically abused and sexually abused, probably more so than people who are not affected by FAS/FAE.

Currently we believe many adults with FAS/FAE are either on the street or in jail. Higher susceptibility to abuse, victimization, trouble with the law -- we suspect that this is one reason for so many aboriginal people being in jail, but we don't have any statistics yet. We are hoping to develop a research project here with our local Justice Department.

Lorraine Stick
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Whitehorse, YK

I think you heard our Elders refer to the mental health-related issues that have rapidly come to the forefront of medical-related needs as the culture goes through a rapid period of transition. The high birth rate, coupled with the economic stresses, related social problems, such as abuse of alcohol and related family violence, have combined to bring mental health related problems from the bottom of a list of 20 health concerns to the fifth concern from the top of health professionals.

Elizabeth Palfrey
Keewatin Regional Health Board
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Rankin Inlet, NWT
92-11-19:43

Substance abuse is a serious predisposing condition for family violence in aboriginal communities.^{xxx} In a more recent report^{xxxi} which focused on the N.W.T., alcohol and addictions is also cited as contributing to abuse. However, this study also shows that while violence often occurs in proportion to the substance abuse, one can exist without the other. To paraphrase one respondent in this study, where alcohol is combined with a poor view of women and pornography, "volatile conditions emerge." The study also notes that when gambling replaces alcoholism, child neglect increases.

In his testimony, Harold Orton described what he believes to be the root causes of alcohol abuse in aboriginal communities:

Also, it has been identified that alcohol and violence of different kinds have replaced traditional ways of coping in a time when peace, self-value and harmony for the individual and the community were honoured. These problems represent, for me, the grief suffered from losing that structured way of life.

Harold Orton
Community Care Centre for Substance Abuse
Royal Commission Public Hearing
Orillia, ONT
93-05-13

In the same vein, a woman decried the extensive destruction alcoholism can exact on the aboriginal family structure and community. She argued:

Women's focus upon alcohol abuse as a key change in their society reflected the fact that, while alcohol abuse was a symptom of the dislocation experienced as a result of the disjunction between their socialized roles and their capacity to perform these roles, it had also caused many of the increasing social strains and problems experienced by Lubicon Lake Cree women as wives, as mothers and as Elders. It was associated with the increase in marital discord, wife abuse and family breakups, the fact that children were on the loose and/or neglected, that children had died in accidents, that community co-operation and sharing had decreased, and that the Elders were no longer listened to.

Rosemary Brown
Committee Against Racism
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Calgary, ALTA
93-05-26:158

In order to provide an organized government response to the challenge of improving aboriginal funding delivery and fair distribution of available resources, governments must acknowledge that their methods of structural organization often act as more of hinderance than a help to those who seek to use their services. In order to obtain government funding, aboriginal groups must first determine whether departments have central or regional mandates; consistent guidelines across departments and user-friendly access and reporting systems. This causes a great deal of frustration on the part of those forced to interface with government as the research team who wrote Damaged and Needing Help attest. They write:

Today the N.W.T. is characterized by a high level of political change and uncertainly, the kinds of government we will have in the future are being shaped by regional land claims, aboriginal self-government negotiations, constitutional development negotiating for the western N.W.T., the devolution of federal programs to the G.N.W.T. territorial government transfer of program responsibilities to communities, fiscal restraint and division of the N.W.T. (At the end of the decade, the Northwest Territories, as a result of the Inuit land claim agreement will be divided into Nunavut in the east, and an-as-yet unnamed western territory).

The political changes in the works are shaping and raising questions about the division of responsibility among government, community family and individual.

Within the various political processes underway, there is a level of uncertainty about who will be responsible for what programs and who will pay the bill. As with other issues, the question raised is: Who is responsible for dealing with and stopping family violence and abuse?

Damaged and Needing Help: Violence And Abuse in Aboriginal Families
in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e, Draft Final Report
Dr. Cynthia Chambers, Lois Little, Aggie Brockman,
Alizette Abel, Bertha Catholique

Sept. 15, 1993 p. 57

Since the establishment of the Family Violence Initiative, the seven government departments and agencies, which were initially involved, have gone through major restructuring. Whole branches and bureaus have disappeared in the wake of these changes. For example, Health and Welfare Canada has been involved since 1991 in the coordination of interdepartmental working groups and an inter-departmental funding committee on family violence. Recently, this department underwent a massive reorganization and became Health Canada. One of the outcomes of this restructuring has been a change in the departmental mandate regarding women. Its responsibilities now include not just spousal abuse but date rape, etc. Often, the general public is not aware of either the restructuring or the resultant shifts in departmental mandates. Structural changes such as these compound problems of access especially where bureaucratic shortcomings already exist. One witness explained how the lack of bureaucratic planning hinders the ability of aboriginal communities to obtain funding to combat family violence.

As far as funding programs are concerned, people always receive the information at the last minute, and there is never enough time to prepare anything. I am going to give you an example of this: a conference on family violence in February 1992. All in all, a month, but after three weeks, the conference had to take place and the last week was for preparing the report. We made inquiries to get speakers, but they all told us that they already had engagements.

We recommend: that bands or other organizations be notified within a reasonable time; that there be more concerted efforts among government departments concerning the allocation of budgets, for the evacuation of victims for example; and that when they provide funding, a teamwork approach be encouraged in the communities.

Delima Niquay
Manawan Council of Women
Royal Commission Public Hearings

Several witnesses at R.C.A.P. hearings also described how certain federal government departments institute policies and practices which are counter-productive to efforts aimed at providing support to the victims of family violence.

When there is conjugal violence, Health and Welfare will not pay the transportation costs of the victim unless certain criteria are met. The victim must have physical injuries. Such a criterion is totally insane, when one knows that the victim has already suffered much. Too often, the social services replay to us that they do not have the money to evacuate victims of violence.

In regard to victims, we recommend that the departments involved, namely Health and Welfare and Social Services, jointly provide budgets to communities for evacuating victims. We also recommend the establishment of an emergency committee, made up of local people working with the community: a social worker, a community health representative and a representative of the Council of Women. It is this committee that could decide on criteria that would be adapted to the realities of the community.

Therese Ottawa
Member of the Manawan Council of Women
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Manouane-t, QUE
92-12-03:269

Several aboriginal speakers spoke of the need for the legal system to support the efforts of local healing systems combat family violence:

The fourth area of fourth portfolio under this also that is cropping up is the legal aspect of our people. We have a family court duty counsellor that is in place. We need to look at the whole tribal system. We need to look at areas how we are going to deal, for instance, with the sexual abuse area. We are looking at other provinces, other tribal groups and with our system it tells me in researching that if problems like that would arise, then there is an external family within the class structure that should be dealing with those problems on an internal level in our communities.

Lynda Prince
Northern Native Family Services
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
Royal Commission Hearings
Stoney Creek, BC

If Native women are going to find "justice" it will only be through massive changes in the Criminal Code, the Indian Act, and possible through the introduction of new amendments to the Canadian Charter which are designed to protect women and children from male violence and male criminal behaviour.

Sharon McIvor, Spokesperson
Native Women's Association of Canada
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT
92-06-26:51

I will continue. We believe in a community based response whereby victims, offenders and our elders are active in the healing process, and where community programs deal not just with healing but prevention as well. The judiciary needs to be sensitized to the fact that alternatives to incarceration better eradicate family violence, that it leads not just to a healthier family system but a healthier social system. These alternatives would be mediation, family counselling, education and awareness of the issue of family violence. Incarceration should be the last resort.

Kula Ellison
Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon Aboriginal Women's Local
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Saskatoon, SASK
92-10-28:86

Lack of information about the scope of family violence prevalent in aboriginal communities is one of the main challenges facing government planners and aboriginal service managers alike. Again, the study Damaged and Needing Help is informative in this regard. The authors describe the status of information on aboriginal family violence in the N.W.T. as follows:

With the exception of those agencies with specific mandates for family violence (eg. McAteer House and G.N.W.T. Family Violence Program), statistics and family violence and abuse in the N.W.T. do not exist. Quantifying the problem is hampered by non-reporting and an apparent inability of agencies to capture complete information on the subject.

Damaged and Needing Help: Violence And Abuse in Aboriginal Families
in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e, Draft Final Report
Dr. Cynthia Chambers, Lois Little, Aggie Brockman,

Sept. 15, 1993

In her study, Violence Against Aboriginal Women (1993), Zellerer draws from previous researcher's data and she reiterates the need for more and/or better research for women, elders and men in family violence situations. Professor Emma LaRocque in her report to the Commission, Violence in Native Communities wrote about the dearth of information about family violence in the Métis population. In her words:

Since it is considerably more difficult to get precise statistics on Métis peoples, it is virtually impossible to say with any exactness the extent of sexual violence in Métis families or communities. However, as more victims are beginning to report, there is every indication that violence including sexual violence is just as problematic, just as extensive as on reserves.^{xxxii}

Family violence is not the only area in which there is a lack of hard statistics. Lorraine Stick maintains that the lack of basic data on fetal alcohol syndrome prohibits effective planning and service development. She states:

We don't have a good data base in the Yukon or elsewhere -- we are not even monitoring those 88 diagnosed in 1985 by Dr. Asante in any kind or organized or coordinate way. We need to at least know who those are, but we are not using this information, never mind knowing anything about those not yet diagnosed. We have a critical lack of information on people with FAE.

We are developing random and uncoordinated plans and not following up or demanding accountability, i.e. treatment centres that advertise as being able to treat people with FAS/FAE. What kind of treatment are they getting? What happens to them? What are the criteria for success?

We don't follow-up on people as they move between programs, i.e. a transfer from an early childhood centre to public school. They need access to other support services such as physio. occupational therapy, family support, et cetera.

Lorraine Stick
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Whitehorse, YK
92-11-18:150

A study done by Brenda Manyfingers shows how the concept of *self-responsibility* acts as a means of social control in traditional aboriginal societies. To quote it:

Its an absence of values. Before the values were so strong, so stringent that to step over those boundaries would mean severe, maybe, ostracization or the family would do something. Because the values were so strong then, individuals would have to think quite hard before they did something. Because they had so much strength and spirited value that such thoughts never entered their mind. But now there are so many things that are eroding our culture.^{xxxiii}

One respondent in this study illustrated how this concept has been replaced in some communities with more self-serving values. In the words of the respondent:

It seems like its more like me, myself, the environment. You don't share with each other. You survive for yourself. You don't share or help people anymore. Not like before. Everything was shared. It's like the "I" generation and you don't care about the next person. So I think that's all due to residential school and getting brainwashed. Like two generations before me. They lacked nurturing and never nurtured their children.^{xxxiv}

Elizabeth Penashue, speaking to the Commission through an interpreter, attributed aboriginal people's lost values to the influences exerted by outside social values and government policies. She stated:

The Innu didn't change the way they live, or haven't changed. It is the government that are changing us, that wants us to live the way they live, but we can't do that, we have to maintain our way of living as well. If they hadn't bothered with the people in our communities in the early days, we would still have what we had in the past. And now it's different. We can't live the way we used to live, and a lot has been taken away, a lot has been destroyed through the governments. There have been a lot of changes, a lot of things brought in by the white man, such as alcohol and other stuff that is destroying us very slowly. In the early days, there was no such thing as alcohol, and there was no such thing as houses being burnt down. There was no such thing as the problems that we are encountering now in our communities. You wouldn't have heard or seen what happened in February when we lost six children in the community of Davis Inlet because of alcohol related. There was no such thing as people going in jail, people taking pills and other substances, as are in Canada now, there was no such thing in the early days when we lived in the past, but now it's changed. Now there are courts, people taking pills and abusing alcohol.

There were other testimonies which suggest that traditional values such as loving, caring and sharing in aboriginal communities have little chance of survival once family violence rears its ugly head.

ManyFingers' study highlights how the aboriginal extended family can be both an asset and a liability. Her study reveals that extended families are accessed for support by 56.7% of all respondents, with men (66.7%) accessing family support more frequently than women (46.7%), This notwithstanding, she also found that in tribal communities, extended families often act as a stressor. She writes:

For both male and female respondents, extended family is a great source of stress (36.7%), but more so for women. For male respondents, the two most frequently cited sources of stress are extended family and poverty/financial hardship.^{xxxv}

While most aboriginal people migrate to urban centres in their quest for employment, many aboriginal women and children are forced into urban areas in a desperate flight from the violence they are experiencing in their homes. Carol Croxon stated:

Some of the reasons why people come to the urban area are to escape the negative life that is everywhere, but is also on First Nations, if you are escaping a battered environment. Some of the times the people come to the urban areas, such as battered women, come to the Ojibwe Family Resource Centre or come to the transition house in North Bay or to one of the resource centres in the area.

Carol Croxon
Ojibwe Family Resource Centre
Royal Commission Public Hearings
North Bay, ONT
93-05-10

The issue of gender received a great deal of attention during the hearings. Many presenters expressed concern about how the abuse of women evokes a tremendous human cost for

aboriginal societies. The following testimonial bears witness to the hidden costs of family violence, particularly as it affects women:

Spousal assault is an immense and usually hidden problem. The cost begins to occur long before, regardless of whether or not a woman goes to the shelter. It is hidden in lost productivity if the woman works outside the home. It is hidden in medical costs. It is important to realize that women do not seek medical attention for injuries inflicted by their spouses, unless they absolutely have to. In 39 out of 40 cases the doctor misses the fact that the injury is due to spousal assault.

Sharon Caudron, Program Director
Women's Resource Centre of Hay River
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Hay River, NWT
93-06-17:110

In another presentation, Joyce Courchene provided insight into how abuse of power and gender discrimination and exclusion contributes to the "feminization" of poverty in aboriginal communities.

There is abuse in our communities. Women are laid-off from work if they speak about their rights or talk about sexual harassment in the workplace. We have to live in those communities. We have families to support. A large portion of our women are the supporting members of the family. We need our jobs. So we will not go out to speak.

And many times, in our communities and our Aboriginal organizations, Aboriginal women are not hired. Non-Aboriginal women are hired for positions that we both qualify for. If we go out and speak publicly, we are threatened over the telephone. If we have Aboriginal leaders, our president in the Indigenous Women's Collective had threatening telephone calls. There's all kinds of ways of trying to silence us. We asked for an in-camera hearing for the women from the Province of Manitoba within the Royal Commission. It fell on deaf ears. We asked for funding so we could bring our women to come out and make presentations in these Hearings, it fell on deaf ears.

We understand the plight of our people. The attitudes of sexism and racism from the institutions of a colonialization. And until such a time as those behaviours and learned behaviours and attitudes are addressed, until the healing happens in our community, the relationships between Aboriginal people will always be divided.

Men against the women. Métis against the Aboriginal, the Status First Nations, non-Status.

Joyce Courchene
Indigenous Women's Collective
Royal Commission Hearings
Winnipeg, MAN
93-06-03:76

One aboriginal woman talked of her efforts to seek employment led to her victimization:

I attempted to gain employment with a Tribal Council, and I travelled a distance for my interview. Upon arriving at my destination and upon my meeting with a Chief, who had called me for the interview, he attempted to rape me. This is two years ago. I am 51 years old, and I know of cases of younger women that have been extremely abused in similar ways.

Grace Meconse, Vice-President
Native Mediation Inc.
Royal Commission Hearings
Winnipeg, MAN
92-04-22:388

Family violence, of course, often goes beyond battery with devastating consequences as one speaker pointed out. She stated:

Another critical factor is the severity of injuries sustained by Aboriginal women through family violence. Aboriginal women experiencing family violence are reluctant to seek medical attention for their mental and physical injuries. The severity of injury suffered as the result of family violence is dangerously high.

Twenty-four per cent of the respondents to our questionnaire indicated that they know of deaths as a result of Aboriginal family violence. And 54 per cent of the respondents suggested that they know of cases where a woman who sustained injuries which required medical treatment as a result of family violence but did not seek medical attention out of fear and shame.

Catherine Brooks, Executive Director
Anduhyaun
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT
92-06-26

Many presenters suggested that social conditions like family violence can only be addressed effectively when women have the opportunity to fully participate in community power structures.

This argument is evident below:

Unless Aboriginal women are guaranteed the right to share equally with men the powers to develop the forms of self-government and the instruments required for dealing with poverty, conjugal violence, incest, the consequences of unemployment, the exclusion of C-31 women and their children from their communities, there will be no significant improvement in living and social conditions. Since women are the main care givers for the children, the ailing, the disabled and the very old, the organization of educational, health and other social and community services can only be successful where women share in the powers of planning and carrying out those services.

Madeleine Parent
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Montreal, QUE
93-05-27:240

Sadly, for many aboriginal women, violence often defines the difference between their potential and actual self-actualization. Rix Rogers testified to the scope of this lost human potential:

I guess the final thing that really was very high on impacting on me was the tremendous potential for the role of Aboriginal women. And my own conclusion that I made to the Minister was, if there's going to be a restoration of full richness of Aboriginal culture, it's probably going to be through the women and that somehow or other that has to be supported.

Rix Rogers
Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT
93-06-03:87

THE BIASES OF MALE LEADERSHIP:

There is alarming evidence of the unwillingness of aboriginal male leaders to acknowledge or respond to the issue of family violence as is demonstrated below:

At one time, many white people accepted the myth that abuse was part of the Native cultures. As a woman and a child who grew up in the North, I say 'Hogwash!' It was only accepted because men, Native and White who controlled the system did not want it changed or did not care. It is totally unacceptable to to-day's society and all judges should have mandatory training in this, as well as, cross-cultural.

Mayor Pat McMahon
City of Yellowknife
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Yellowknife, NWT
92-12-09:93

By failing to protect the rights of aboriginal women, the aboriginal male leadership has not only put the safety and well-being of aboriginal women at risk but, they have implicitly condoned this type of violence. Marilyn Fontaine of the Aboriginal Women's Unity Coalition quoted from the findings of the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry in her presentation to us. She quoted the Inquiry as stating:

Most chiefs and council members are male and often exhibit bias in favour of the male partner in a domestic abuse situation. This can effectively chase the women from her home and community.

The unwillingness of chiefs and councils to address the plight of women and children suffering abuse at the hand of husbands and fathers is quite alarming. We are concerned enough about it to state that we believe that the failure of Aboriginal government leaders to deal at all with the problem of domestic abuse is unconscionable. We believe that there is heavy responsibility on Aboriginal leaders to recognize the significance of the problem within their own communities. They must begin to recognize, as well, how much their silence and failure to act actually contribute to the problem...

Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry
as quoted by: Marilyn Fontaine,
President, Aboriginal Women's Unity Coalition
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Winnipeg, MAN
92-04-23:110

Several witnesses before the Commission stated that male leaders have criticized aboriginal women for speaking-out against family violence and accused them of undermining the drive for self-government. To quote:

The Coalition is prepared to support the leadership, however not at the expense of silencing the reality that women, children and men are being abused and killed.

Marilyn Fontaine, President
Aboriginal Women's Unity Coalition
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Winnipeg, MAN
92-04-23:110

INTEGRATING MEN INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE INITIATIVES:

A number of testimonials at the hearings dealt with the need to integrate men into the war against family violence. They said this is necessary for four reasons. First, this arrangement would encourage change in the unequal relations between aboriginal men and women as several witnesses noted:

I think that native men have to take responsibility for their own actions in their own communities and in their homes. We don't need to see any more violence in our homes. We don't need to see any more women that are going to be abused and assaulted by native men.

Brenda Small
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Moose Factory, ONT
92-06-04:231

We hope as we go along and we look at this whole issue that we are forgetting another important part of this family structure and that is the men. How it has been dealt with I guess in our work is when a women is abused the police are called. The cops come and they take the man away from home. He appears in front of the judge and gets sentenced to jail.

Lillian Sanderson
La Ronge Native Women's Council
Royal Commission Public Hearings

La Ronge, SASK
92-05-28

Many of the male leaders within Aboriginal communities are very unhealthy, this makes for an unhealthy communities. It is time we started speaking out and voicing our concern. It's bad enough we have to fight with the non-Aboriginal communities; we don't need to be fighting with each other.

Lillian George
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Prince George, BC
93-05-31:226

It is not enough to say these are dysfunctional societies and therefore male violence is a way of life. It is not enough to say these are dysfunctional males and therefore this excuses the male violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women, children and elders. It is a continuous existence. It must be stopped. The male violence will not stop by putting Aboriginal men in charge of criminal justice administration.

Sharon McIvor, Spokesperson
Native Women's Association of Canada
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT
92-06-26:51

The second reason why men must be integrated into family violence initiatives is because it has become evident that aboriginal men, as well as, aboriginal women have high victimization rates when it comes to family violence. Two recent studies show this to be the case. In inner cities and in childhood, more males are generally exposed to spousal and severe child abuse while females were subjected to child sexual abuse.^{xxxvi} Similarly, professionals working in the North say aboriginal men have suffered are more child sexual abuse then previously believed and they have been as devastated by this as women have been.^{xxxvii} Beyond these few studies, however, there is virtually no reporting of these sexual assaults.^{xxxviii}

I cannot conceive my children being abused, so -- because of my children and because they are women -- I have one son, and I will protect him as well as I protect my two little girls.

I know men -- some men are abused and those things have to be recognized, those things have to be brought to the front.

Grace Delaney
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Moose Factory, ONT
92-06-09 (Part 2)

Just recently I went to a policing conference in Lac La Biche and I met one of the native counsellor supervisor. I was thrilled to hear that he wants to run a men's support group and a men's anger group.

Christine Hoffman, Chairman
North Central Alberta Crisis Intervention Association
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Lac La Biche, ALTA
92-06-09:195

"Yes, because they usually deal with aggression, with aggression: like if you don't leave, you know threats and stuff. You have to remember that although these men are violent and abusive, they are also victims themselves and they need someone to listen and to understand as well. Once you give them that much string to play with and let them say what they have to say and get it off their chests, generally most of them calm down and phone back in 10 minutes and say: "Well, I am sorry for that." and stuff like that.

Kula Ellison
Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon Area Women's Local
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Saskatoon, SASK
92-10-28:139

We recognize that there's a lack of services for all men, specifically in northern Alberta.

Charmaine Hammond, Executive Director
Unity House
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Fort McMurray, ALTA
92-06-16:186

In the Northwest Territories there is no funding for men who are victims, there is no funding for programs for women who are violent.

Bill Riddell
Tuvvik Committee on Social Issues
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Iqaluit, NWT
92-05-25:34

The third reason why men have to be part of family violence prevention rests with their dual experience. Raising sensitivities and creating a collective consciousness ensures an informed viewpoint of men as both perpetrators and victims of family violence. All told, this is critical to achieving long lasting resolution of aboriginal family violence. Several witnesses spoke about male victimization and its relation to male-initiated violence.

To me that is a very near and dear subject because I think that when a man abuses there is a problem there that he was a victim before he was an abuser. I think we need to look at issues that are going to deal with this man not just as an offender, but also as a victim.

Christine Hoffman, Chairman
North Central Alberta Crisis Intervention Association
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Lac La Biche, ALTA
92-6-09:195

We would like to return to the issue of family violence. Our women's hearts are breaking from the pain this is causing. Family violence is not just a woman's issue. We are reminded that our men are victims too. We believe that if healing our families and communities is to occur our men must be involved. We were heartened when the first Men and Wellness Conference was held in the city not long ago.

Kula Ellison
Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon Aboriginal Women's Local
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Saskatoon, SASK
92-10-28:86

Finally, men must be involved in family violence activities because, in keeping with the aboriginal view of the interrelatedness of all factions and elements within aboriginal society, men play an integral part of human development as the following presenter alluded to. He states:

I think there needs to be a tremendous stress on education which enhances the pride and abilities of our youth. A good deal is said -- and I am sure the Commission has heard this many times -- about the plight of Aboriginal women. I don't want to

disparage those remarks in any way. I have heard them over and over again. But my own experience is that the group within our society which is suffering the most is Aboriginal men. It is largely our men, both Indian and Métis, who are in the prisons and penitentiaries of this country.

Part of that arises out of the fact that the pride of our people has been killed in many individuals. Our young men have suffered a psychological castration complex for the last 100 years, and it is time that this was stopped so that our young men can turn to positive pursuits by way of education, so that we can break the cycle of criminality and imprisonment, so that we can break the cycle of the mistreatment of women and children in our communities -- and it happens all over, again a result colonialism. It is only through positive education controlled by our own peoples that can take place.

Jim Penton
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Lethbridge, ALTA
93-05-25:121

Integrating men into family violence activities poses many challenges. Programs aimed at male perpetrators of family violence must be closely tied to sound aboriginal concepts of justice and punishment. Because "tribal concepts of justice are often conciliatory versus adversarial, grounded in restitutive principles versus retribution"^{xxxix}, mainstream approaches to jailing abusers may not be viable or acceptable options in many aboriginal communities. Most important, people cannot lose sight of women's real fears of abusive men when we make changes. These are very well grounded feelings. The fact is, some women would have serious reservations about involving men in family violence initiatives at all. They simply have no faith in their intentions and potential to change for the better. As McIvor states:

The development of programs, services, and policies for handling domestic violence has been placed in the hands of men. Has it resulted in a reduction in this kind of violence? Is a woman or a child safe in their own home in an aboriginal community? The statistics show this is not the case. As one woman said, people are killing each other in our communities. Do they want to govern that? Men rarely speak of family violence. Men rarely speak of incest. Men rarely speak of gang rape and what they are doing about it.

Ms. Stacey-Moore, a trained social worker and community activities, and myself, a lawyer and community legal worker, agree with the findings of the Report of the Manitoba Native Justice Inquiry that:

Aboriginal women and their children are the victims of racism, of sexism and of unconscionable levels of domestic violence.

Sharon McIvor, Spokesperson
Native Women's Association of Canada
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Toronto, ONT
92-06-26:51

While some people express concern about elders who use or abuse their authority or standing within the community, the vast majority of aboriginal people believe in their legitimacy and potential to make a difference in aboriginal life. Numerous witnesses spoke of the need for elders to assume a co-active role in the fight against family violence and in the strengthening of aboriginal families. To quote:

We need to use our elders in a more real sense. Right now what I can see ask using our elders for is to open with a prayer and close with a prayer, but our traditional culture long ago used to use our elders in a very real sense, in a very real way they are very highly respected people. And I think we need to utilize them in a better fashion than we have been.

Edith Young, Executive Member and V.P.
Indigenous Women's Collective
Apaskwak of Aboriginal Women
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Thompson, MAN
93-05-31:43

Our Elders need to become more active in healing, being a positive role model, teaching the younger generations about our culture and traditions. Give the healthy Elders a chance to be counsellors in the community. It is our belief that we learn from the stories told by our grandmothers and grandfathers. This has been lost and must be brought back.

Ms. Lillian George
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Prince George, BC

So we would like to see the Elders become our foster parenting skills teachers. To continue their teaching with our younger women and our younger mothers and our children. We would like see funding come in that areas for parenting skills for First Nations Aboriginal people.

Ms. Florence Hackett
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Vancouver, BC
93-06-03:256

To recognize our elders as wise teachers. To give them the recognition and respect that they deserve. Our elders should not have to have a piece of paper, a certificate or a diploma to teach in any of our daycare centre or our school because it is them who has knowledge and a lifetime of experience.

Lorraine McRae
Couchiching Association for Native Services
Royal Commission Hearings
Orillia, ONT
93-05-13:5

I respectfully request that you call forth your Elders, who are your history books, to share your history with us. I call upon educators, both Native and non-Native, to seek out the school texts which tell only part of the truth or, worse, the untruths about Aboriginal peoples and supplement them with the books now being written by Native authors and historians and those who have sought and then recorded the Aboriginal people's history in all its diversity.

Jean Koning
Royal Commission Public Hearings
London, ONT
93-05-12:339

For example, we could use our Elders. Although they don't have the formal education, they don't have a certificate saying that they have this certain expertise, I think they could contribute to a program such as suicide prevention.

Nowya Williams
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Rankin Inlet, NWT
92-11-19:181

In regard to the Elders, I as a young boy, used to listen to the Elders in my community. Right up until this day I still do it. They have a lot wisdom and knowledge.

Rita Corbiere, Ojibwe Elder

In her study, ManyFingers found that "100% of male tribal respondents gave positive feedback on the utilization of elders for family stress [while] 26.7% of female respondents indicated accessing other resources." The researcher attributes the lack of female participation in traditional counselling to "lack of exposure to elders and counsellors." Interestingly 75% of urban respondents, male and female, provided positive feedback on working with elders.^{x1}

In the main, elders appear to be an invaluable source of inspiration for better living formulas. Merle Beedie stated:

One elder, an Anishnawbeque said: The next 500 years are for native people. That is so encouraging. And they say, Promote talking circles, teaching circles, healing circles to the Native and the non-Native communities, promote healing lodges in our territories, develop all forms of teaching materials for the schools, TV programs, plays for the theatres, movies, et cetera, et cetera. Educate all the community about our history, what our history was and is. Invite non-Native people to add to this history because some non-Native people out there know about our history and the part they played in this, and they have to match roles, and we did survive together. Get our women into politics of our communities and nations and support women's groups whenever and wherever in our communities because they are our life givers, they are our peace keepers, they are our faith keepers.

Merle Beedie, Christian Island First Nation
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Orillia, ONT
93-05-13

Although it is not the only spiritual symbol at work in aboriginal communities, the Medicine Wheel^{xii} is one of the most popular. Its appeal lies in its ability to reflect aboriginal ideology and thought.^{xiii}

A holistic approach is also inherent in the Medicine Wheel, meaning an individual must be personally involved and morally committed to strive toward the inward and outward balance

depicted in natural and supernatural laws. Because it is based on the concept of the medicine wheel, healing circles seem to win universal favour amongst all aboriginal groups. Healing circles have been adopted as a preventative, supportive and rehabilitative measure in dealing with family violence. Several witnesses spoke about these circles and their healing effects:

Many people in the different communities who have used the Healing Circle process have become very effective in their helping role. Many of us who are in that healing process have worked to empower ourselves and others and, by doing so, we have become effective agents of positive changes within the Native community.

Peggy Bird
Chippewas of Sarnia Healing Circle
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Sarnia, ONT
93-05-10:226

The ultimate goal for the S.A.T.S. [Sexual Abuse Treatment Services] program is family unification. This program was developed by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people and services to be provided by Aboriginal therapists. We have incorporated traditional and contemporary healing methods. For example, sweats, smudging, healing/talking circles, ceremonial rights, versus art and play therapy, psychodrama, gestalt and psychotherapy. Our traditional healing methods were very effective before European contact. It they worked then why can't they work now?

Ms. Lillian George
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Prince George, BC
93-05-31:22

Self-help groups are now beginning to emerge and sharing their knowledge of traditional medicine, because modern medicine does not heal the whole body. It is necessary to relearn and reappropriate knowledge of traditional medicine, because at the moment, although that is not to say that we did not have the knowledge before, but rather that it was weakened by religion, and also by modern medicine, which did not believe in traditional medicine because there was nothing written about it, or nothing had been proved, because it had not been demonstrated under microscopes. But, little by little, no other avenues were open for self-healing with respect to the problems that are dramatically affecting our communities.

Danielle Descent
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Mani-Utenam-t, QUE

When we first started the training, one of the most important concepts we learned was that, before we reach out to help the people around us, we must first understand how to help ourselves. By doing this, we needed to be honest and look within ourselves and deal with our own unresolved issues that we have been carrying.

Peggy Bird
Chippewas of Sarnia Healing Circle
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Sarnia, ONT
93-05-10:226

On the reproductive health, social issues, child sex abuse, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are a threat to the Inuit people. This can be social, psychological or physical. The Inuit strongly favour custom adoption, and do not, as a whole, as a people, support abortion.

Ineaq Korgak, Executive Assistant
Baffin Regional Health Board
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Iqaluit, NWT
92-05-26:8

Holistic approach, which would include spiritual healing and traditional medicine."

Ms. Marlene Thio-Watts, R.N., Co-ordinator
Healthiest Babies Possible Pregnancy Outreach Program
Prince George Native Friendship Centre
Royal Commission Hearings
Prince George, BC
93-06001:121

Aboriginal healing priorities and strategies include the development of healing lodges or healing centres. Not surprising, aboriginal people see these as places where people unite and get the self-esteem, pride and empowerment they need so badly. Two other speakers add their voices on merits of healing places:

Let's also make treatment centres available that will facilitate healing for those affected and that includes perpetrators, because I believe that perpetrators have also been abused, everybody that has been affected by sexual abuse.

Monica Goulet
Royal Commission Public Hearings
La Ronge, SASK
92-05-28:106

The community healing aspect talks about healing our people. We are talking about one global treatment centre but also dealing with all the different areas that people need. One area may be in dealing with the cultural aspect of our people, maybe the Stoney Creek elders healing camp where they want where they can bring people after treating them for their addictions back into their culture. We might have another tribal area where they would focus on sexual abuse, but all these areas need to be touched. Holistic in another sense, not just in the policy of giving us funds but also deals with the spirit, soul and body of a person. That is the holistic treatment that our people are interested in and that they want in order for a person to be adequately healed.

Lynda Prince
Northern Native Family Services
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Stoney Creek, BC
92-06-18:370

The second part is from this, then the healing will start. What I see happening within my own community in Saskatoon, with all the various conferences that are going on, is that a lot of people want to know how do we heal as people, how do we heal as a nation? Healing has to come from the individual first for it to have that ripple effect. That will go in turn down to our children, and from that it will go from the family and how you relate, your relationship with your peers' families, with everybody. It improves once you can work through all the anger and the hate that a lot people have toward the systems that are still in place. I can't help but stress the education part within either the public -- or just the education in general.

Cindy Sparvier
Social Worker
Joe Duquette High School
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Saskatoon, SASK
92-10-27:198

As this report attests, the question of the credibility and authenticity of some healers is now a subject of aboriginal debate. As aboriginal communities revive traditional organizational and

service models such as healing lodges and centres, it will be incumbent upon them to enact codes of conduct, regulations and standards of surveillance to ensure that the rights of their citizens are not infringed upon and that their clients are not placed in harms way. One witness, Lillian Sanderson, posed a possible solution for regulating the activities of those who would identify themselves as "healers" as follows:

We have also come across many self-proclaimed healers who have abused or exploited traditional spirituality in their own Aboriginal people.

No, it is gift that you are given. For controlling the spiritual malpractice, I guess it would be through all the Elders in each community. They would know the ones who are abusing the sweat lodge and abusing the medicines. It would be up to all the different Elders in all the different communities and provinces, both in Canada and in the States, to have a list of qualified healers and non-qualified healers, and that list could be distributed throughout each reserve.

Lillian Sanderson
Aboriginal Women's Council
Royal Commission Hearings
Saskatoon, Sask.
93-05-13

Family violence initiatives have provided aboriginal communities with the opportunity to explore different formulas and mechanisms for increasing the involvement of their own as helpers. Often, the employment of community members is the preferred approach because local helpers are perceived as culturally sensitive and knowledgeable about community circumstances.

We have to concentrate on the healing of the whole family, not just one individual. We have to heal the whole family. In the area of abuse, the victim and the offender must be healed and all the family members that are affected by this one situation of abuse. For that, we need money to train our own people to do the healing, to train our own people to do the counselling.

Rosa Wright
Deh Cho Regional Representative
Native Women's Association for NWT
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Fort Simpson, NWT
92-05-26:50

Employing community members in local healing strategies has definite advantages. However, the fact that some of these workers, themselves, may have either come from an abusive family environment or they may be currently involved in an abusive relationship as some of witnesses reported, should not be ignored. Three women argue for helping the helpers:

I believe there is a great need for healing and support services for the Aboriginal healers in the community. I have worked with a number of them, For some of them, I have actually acted as their counsellors. Counsellors, as well, most of them are working on their own healing issues. They are isolated. They are under immense social pressure within the communities to often times not report violence and to follow through on the legal route. A lot of that pressure is coming from extended families.

Sarah Calaher
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Yellowknife, NWT
92-12-07

Unfortunately, the high rates of alcoholism, physical and sexual abuse are common in many native communities, and it must be recognized that health care providers who come from these communities may suffer proportionately from the same pattern of problems.

Dr. Ann C. Macaulay
Associate Professor, Dept. of Family Medicine, McGill University
Former Director, Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Kahnawake, QUE
93-05-05

Community care givers may need help too along with support and understanding. There is a belief that helpers should live a perfect life themselves before they are able to help others. Excessive judgement and a lack of trust and faith in each other's abilities makes helping difficult. Lack of personal responsibility in a situation arises from non-traditional approaches such as blaming and victimization.

Carol Croxon, Director
Ojibway Family Resource Centre
Royal Commission Public Hearings
North Bay, ONT
93-05-10:124

These workers need support so they can deal with their personal issues and so that they do not bring dysfunctional attitudes or practices into the work-setting wherein they may pose a further risk to their clients. Aboriginal organizations should establish employee assistance programs so that these workers can begin their own healing journey.

B. MEANING AND CONNECTIONS: THE MISSING PEACE

II. FAMILY VIOLENCE IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES: THE STRUGGLE AND THE RESISTANCE.

UNCOVERING THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF FAMILY VIOLENCE:

The aboriginal concept of family involves more than the nuclear one dominant in mainstream Canadian society. Aboriginal families incorporate and embrace extended family members as well. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and increasingly non-blood relations, form the rubric of the aboriginal family. A healthy aboriginal family was traditionally all encompassing.

The extent to which the aboriginal family has become the new arena of struggle and resistance has little recognition. The struggle is obvious when what families are going through is considered.

For one thing, aboriginal families have become increasingly insular. Sharing and assistance even from elders has become restricted to family groupings and dependency on cash payments^{xliii}.

Higher rates of teenage pregnancies, single mothers dependent upon the welfare system and detached partners have skewed family structures. These trends indicate that rather than breaking-up, families are not even forming. Little wonder single parent families lack the support systems of strong family networks.

Admittedly, aboriginal families are in constant struggle whether it is because they have limited financial means, have fewer opportunities to take part in beleaguered community affairs or they have adopted oppressive value systems^{xliv}, they are in a dangerous slide to total disintegration. However, when taking an eagle's eye view of the situation, one can see how aboriginal peoples have turned this danger into an opportunity for resistance.

By glorifying the past, they have driven home the point that aboriginal families traditionally worked in a co-operative and communal manner. This provided people with meaningful roles and encouraged close relationships between parents and offspring. They said healthy families came about because each individual was personally committed to this end. However, they also bared their souls about family violence and the immense suffering it has caused. On both counts their memories cannot be erased. To do so would be to undermine their resistance.

There is an urgent need to deepen the understanding of aboriginal family violence and to heighten the ability to respond to its devastating impact. Probing the nature and origin of family violence will help increase knowledge of the relationship between healthy aboriginal families, sustained human development, and strong aboriginal nations.

Evidence shows that family violence is a destructive barrier to aboriginal development because it:

- a) undermines the high esteem aboriginal peoples bestow on the bastion of human life and relations, the aboriginal family;
- b) discourages possibilities for the social integration of family members;
- c) jeopardizes the sharing of responsibilities aimed at improving aboriginal social well-being;
- d) contributes to aboriginal social instability and social disintegration;
- e) affects the ability of the individual and community to cope with the on-going impact of structural and cultural change;

- f) threatens aboriginal community democracy, productivity and values; and
- g) crowds individual and public agendas, putting a stress on limited aboriginal development resources.

PROMOTING HEALTHY FAMILIES:

In the wake of the extensive consultations with aboriginal peoples, it became clear that the objective of realizing healthy families still enjoys wide public favour. Indeed, healthy families are a source of community wealth and individual self-determination. Aboriginal people also see the attainment of healthy families as an important outcome of their community development activities. Not surprisingly, they feel families will develop and strengthen if concerted efforts are made to:

- change the total environment, lifestyles and high risk behaviour that predispose aboriginal families to violence;
- develop a feeling of shared responsibilities to encourage, cultivate and discipline happy and productive aboriginal families;
- co-operate to reduce the sad outcomes caused by aboriginal family violence; and
- make more workable, the intervention strategies they put into place.

TELLING IS HEALING:

This report is made up of many words. They are not empty ones because they come from ordinary aboriginal peoples who are now talking back.

This report attempts to reflect as faithfully as possible the words of aboriginal people. In a general sense, five key issues around family violence are explored. These include:

- the fact it knows no boundaries and hits aboriginal people the hardest;
- the initiatives currently in place to control and/or end the problem in Canada;

- the main features of aboriginal-specific family violence;
- the ways aboriginal people are dealing with the problem; and
- the recommendations for lasting change.

The aboriginal people who shared their stories are researchers in their own right. Not only have they lived the experience but they have also stood back to take a critical look at family violence and to report on their findings. Their testimonials along with existing literature provide a better understanding of the problem. With this in mind, healing symbols, images and discourse may be addressed. The tenacity and ingenuity of spirit with which aboriginal peoples have resisted repression and exploitation is legendary. Even with words, they express a twofold experience. They defy the oppressive effects of dominant forces as they affirm their own social reality. Whether words have taken the form of songs, dreams, prayers, prophecies, they play a key role in inspiring the people to move toward greater self-sufficiency, self-reliance, healing and oneness with others. The following poem is written by Vicki Smith McLain. In her own words, she describes the horrors of family violence but she also writes about the peace she finds in her identity and culture. She writes:

Buffalo Woman

*A little Native girl, dark-skinned, haunting eyes.
 Pushed aside and rejected by her parents...confused and hurt.
 Ugly names, scorn, beatings...ashamed and frightened.
 No affection...only bad touches.*

*Vivid memories of playing strange games with older siblings and
 cousins.
 And catching her auntie and uncle "doing it".
 Awakened feelings in her she didn't understand.
 She still has no memory of her years before she was four.
 Only the haunting knowledge that she was a bad girl.
 That something was wrong.*

She grew older, hating the sounds of drunken talk and fighting.

The family seemed to live in separate rooms of the house.

*Silence broken by the ticking of the clock.
Occasional laughter and happy moments.
She stood on the outside, looking in.*

*She found solace in being alone.
Walking by the creek, swimming in the river, climbing trees.*

*She talked to the wind, the water, the birds.
And to the small creatures crawling on the ground.
She hated home, school, growing up.*

"Stupid," "crazy," "bastard," "little nigger," "dirty Indian."

*And she had secrets.
No one to tell about what her "uncles" did to her.
How the old white man touched her.
Sometimes she liked the candy ...and the touch too.*

Bad girl! Wrong!

Her body changed, her growing chest bound tightly with a cloth.

*No teachings...only a beating when the blood came.
Accusations..."You did something bad with a boy!"
Anger...raged within her.
Alcohol...the sweet fire in the pit of her stomach.
Affection...from young drunken white boys.
Hugs and kisses came naturally with a few beers guzzled down quickly.*

*She made happen what she read in dirty pocket books.
"The Indian girl from the other side of the tracks."
"Tramp, "bitch," "slut" ...more names, more shame.*

*Her parent signed her over to the government.
To a strange white Catholic foster home in the big city.
She was beaten, spit on, sent to church and had her long black hair cut off.*

*Runaway time...then a long police ride to a convent on a
hill.
Straight-back women with long black robes and cold staring eyes.
Confession and absolution from sin!
The bony fingers and dark male shadows crept into her dreams.
The stark loneliness and pain followed her everywhere.*

*Eighteen years old and free from bondage.
Nineteen years old and pregnant.*

*Then a five-year roller-coaster ride of highs and blackouts.
Lost in booze, pills, needles and the arms of many faceless men.
Black eyes and broken bones, violence and broken promises.
Nightmares and screams in the night.
Old white wrinkled hands reaching for her in dreams.
Touching, groping, hurting.
A little girl cries, somewhere in the darkness.*

The woman-child cries out from the depths of years of pain...

"Pity me, love me...my Creator."

*And I stood at the doorway of my new life.
The tobacco road welcomed me.
Sweat lodges and sweetgrass, sobriety and visions.
Healing and discover, forgiveness and love.
The wonderment and joy of motherhood and family.
The trusting arms of my husband and brothers.
The life-bond of my mother and sisters.
My spirit is alive and sings her song...*

*"To my mother, the earth, who beckons to me
Who gently holds me and soothes my wounds.
To my father, the sun, who bathes me in light*

*Who comforts the darkness in my soul.
To my grandmothers and grandfathers, who protect me
Who guide me on my journey of healing and living.
To my Creator, the great mystery, who gave me life.
I offer you my tobacco...meegwetch."*

Vicki Smith McLain
Vis-A-Vis: A National Newsletter on Family Violence
1993:13

EVERYDAY FORMS OF VIOLENCE:

The relationship between aboriginal peoples and violence is bitter and long. It is difficult because just when family violence is in such a need of priority attention, the hearings remind us not to lose sight of the combined effects of other negative violations aboriginal peoples have known. For the purposes of this report, it is suffice to note that whatever form violence takes, it is the number one development problem for aboriginal peoples today. It plays an important role because it blocks their complete well-being. Full stop!

Thus, it is urgent to write about the relations, processes and conditions by which the total integrity of aboriginal peoples has been violated.^{xlv} Judging from aboriginal peoples' testimonies at the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' hearings, they live in a chronic state of violence. Poor housing, high unemployment, high suicide rates and family violence relegate them to the margins of society. In the end, poverties visited upon individuals, communities and nations reflect unmet human needs and each generate pathologies^{xlvi} like alienation and forced migrations.

It is these insights which have helped to deal with family violence in a more responsible manner.

For one thing, it becomes clear that this problem must be looked at in context. This has meant reaching an understanding of how the over-riding structural forms of violence fuse with physical violence. People have shown that more weight cannot be given to the former for by doing so, the human impact of personal violence appears insignificant and small. In addition, some people caution against the justification of family violence as a natural outcome of the chronic state of violence. Instead, they wanted violence to be treated as a spectrum. For them, peaceable solutions to family violence will be brought about only when personal and structural violence are opposed in tandem.

There is evidence of growing social stratification in aboriginal communities. The motor that drives this engine is called "class": the "haves" and the "have nots." To understand the process of social stratification in reserve communities, it is important to note that even if a community "as a whole is poor, this does not mean that everyone is poor."^{xlvii} The gap between the rich and poor on-reserve often stems from discriminatory economic development policies and practices which are pro-elite, pro-rich and anti-tradition.

Today, Chiefs and Councils are entrusted with a great deal of power. They often hold sway over who gets housing and who is offered employment. They often determine who is included and who is excluded from the communities economic and social order. The concentration of such power in the hands of the few can be a breeding ground for nepotism and patronage.^{xlviii} Such charges are often directed at the Chief and Council by ordinary community members. There is a wide-spread belief that these individuals may dispense favours in the form of houses and jobs and that all too often, the only people to benefit from their influence is their next-of-kin.

Aboriginal leaders recognize that elders hold a special and honoured status within the aboriginal community. Leaders, therefore, often strike alliances with elders in order to benefit from their spiritual guidance and wisdom or because they know this group has the credibility and ability to keep peaceful discussions going as political agendas get done. Generally, community members tolerate and support the fact that elders are accepting larger roles in guiding community change around issues like family violence while at the same time exerting extraordinary power and influence on the decision makers. Some community members, however, find elder-political alliances more troublesome.

It is not unknown for some aboriginal leaders to use elders, aboriginal traditions or culture, for more self-serving personal or political reasons. While elders can play a critical role in bringing popular opinions forward into power domains, evoking a "spiritual" process into political decision-making can silence people who do not dare to challenge it because they fear the repercussions of doing so. Many aboriginal people feel deceived, by the aboriginal leadership and by elders alike, when they are denied access to the decision arena by the political abuse of spirituality.

Spiritual abuse is beginning to surface as a topical issue in aboriginal communities. More people are re-attributing the abuse of "medicine" to their living problems. Despite this, there remains a great deal of reticence amongst most aboriginal people to talk about it. This contrasts sharply with the dogmatic criticism that the Churches have received on such issues as residential school syndrome. The task of dealing with spiritual abuse is complex and it must consider the role "medicine" plays in aboriginal development. Because many aboriginal communities are undergoing a revival expressed primarily through spiritual and cultural recovery, they currently

may be especially vulnerable to such abuse. Greater dialogue and research is needed in this area.

Elders hold a position of honour within the aboriginal community. Despite this, in the hearings and in the research, it was evident that elders are not immune from exercising their own forms of abuse. Because of the status of elders and their "spiritual" or "medicine" powers, people are terrified whenever they have to confront an elder who is transgressing taboos like touching children inappropriately in a sweat lodge ceremony.^{xlix} Also "so-called" traditional healers who have used their positions of respect and trust in the aboriginal community to take advantage the pain and suffering of their own people:

We have also come across many self-proclaimed healers who have abused and exploited traditional spirituality in their own Aboriginal people.

Lillian Sanderson
Aboriginal Women's Council
Royal Commission Hearings
Saskatoon, SASK
93-05-13

Dogmatic criticism of community leaders and community authorities is generally not well received by them. While it may not be popular to attribute a community's dysfunction to its leaders, the fact remains that many aboriginal people took advantage of the hearings to speak-out about how some leaders have pursued their own interests ahead of the collective interests of their constituents.

Situating communal violence in the context of aboriginal self-government means aboriginal leaders will have to move beyond their tendency to attribute all the social ills of aboriginal communities to external forces. They will have to examine how their own behaviours, attitudes and biases contribute to the structural violence inherent in many aboriginal communities. Aboriginal leaders should note that true self government can only be achieved when, "each centre of power is carefully balanced against all others..."^{li} and "...a dynamic balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of the community, between freedom and order, between passions and principles"^{li} have been delineated, respected and maintained.

HIGH RISK STAGES OF PEOPLE'S LIFETIMES AND CONDITIONS:

From the evidence presented, it is believed that more effort and resources need to be oriented towards reducing, controlling or eliminating the critical times and conditions in an aboriginal person's life when she or he is most vulnerable to family violence. This is a major departure from past thinking.

Before there was a tendency to see all aboriginal peoples as victims of social problems from the time they are born until they die. Sadly, this can be the case for some. However, what has become clear is that just as aboriginal peoples are different from one another, they also are not equally at risk to problems of family violence for all times. Although some would argue against the possibility of escaping the long term effects of family violence, there are aboriginal peoples who have broken the cycle and are living safer and happier lives.

To secure this outcome for others, it is necessary to steer away from a narrow approach which deters action away from those most in need. At the same time, action cannot be limited by favouring one high risk group over another. To do so would be to fall into the trap of contributing to the "imbalance and abuse of power [which] is at the core of family violence."^{lii}

Instead what aboriginal peoples have suggested is to cast the net widely. They also have said to use the right size of net. Pulling in people for healing is not a mere happening. It has to be a just, inclusive and sustainable process. The net needs to pull in those aboriginal peoples who are suffering through high risk stages and conditions.

The high risk stages for family violence include the time before birth, childhood, youth, motherhood and old age. Upon examining lifetime conditions, it becomes evident that differences predispose individuals to family violence. These were economic, social, physical, mental and sexual in scope.

To begin, being young in aboriginal communities can be a high risk stage for family violence. It is important to note that some youths have certain advantages in some communities. For the most part, this development is driven by alien values. The end result is a profound shift in social relationships where youth have come to focus on self-fulfilment rather than on community co-operation.^{liii}

Even as youth are indulged, they are often left to make their own way in life. Disregard for traditional systems and learning paths, coupled with individual isolation, has led many of them to solitary pursuits of their cultural roots and identity.^{liv} This can result in youth taking as their own, new knowledge with little regard for potential hazards. Faulty interpretations and connections in this rediscovery can be misleading. Where cultural teachings are not well thought out in their given context, dangerous self-denial of vulnerability can take place.

For aboriginal youth to fully benefit from exploring the traditional path, they need the gentle and supportive guidance of good leaders.^{lv}

The willingness of aboriginal youth to entrust the shaping of their world view, behaviour and lifestyle to elders and community leaders is dependent upon the extent to which youth identify with and have confidence in these people as protectors, teachers or mentors.^{lvi}

When they are completely at sea, young people develop unhappy relationships with their families, children and spouses along with a lack of personal direction and development. Very often, this discontent ends in family violence. This is often rooted in a home-grown cynicism.

III. WHEN SOLITUDES MEET ON COMMON GROUND: MAINSTREAM VERSUS LOCAL RESPONSES

Mainstream Canadian society has made a valiant effort to respond to the issue of family violence. Its successes and failures have been documented in the published literature. While the folly of imposing mainstream solutions on aboriginal families exists, it is important to recognize that these efforts may provide valuable lessons regarding how violence-free family units might be realized in aboriginal communities.

This section of the report is intended to achieve three objectives. First, to provide an overview of federal government efforts to combat family violence; second, to outline some of the current issues in the field of family violence in Canada; and finally, to identify factors which government and aboriginal communities may want to consider in developing future anti-family violence activities.

HOW CANADA FIGHTS FAMILY VIOLENCE:

Mainstream Canadian society has had the advantage of having numerous years of experience in combatting family violence. However, it is worth asking what Canada's impetus for funding family violence initiatives was. Is Canada's involvement in family violence brought about by moral obligations, pressure from a range of constituents, response to critical public incidents or labour market concerns?

In one of its publications called Family Violence: Situation Paper, the Family Violence Prevention Division outlines the history of Canada's engagement in anti-violence policy development. It reports that since the 1970s, women have formalized lobby efforts to bring abuse against women and children to the forefront of policy making. Government responded to the public concern over a growing problem, when in 1991, it established the Family Violence Prevention Division. As it did so, it expressed its motivation for funding this initiative with these words: "Reducing the extent of family violence will help prevent a broad range of social and criminal problems and is a certain investment in the well-being of future generations."

The federal government's four year Family Violence Initiative (April 1,1991-March 31,1995) is funded at the level of \$136 million and proposes to:

- involve all Canadians mobilizing community action;

- strengthen Canada's legal framework;
- establish services in Indian reserves and Inuit communities;
- strengthen Canada's ability to help victims and stop offenders;
- provide more housing for abused women and their children;
- enhance national information on the extent and nature of family violence, and
- share information and solutions across the country.

While the program's objectives make specific reference to "Indian reserves and Inuit communities", Health Canada also funds off-reserve family violence initiatives thereby suggesting that Métis peoples are also viewed as a population at risk^{lvii}.

The Family Violence Initiative has done much to increase society's awareness of family violence as an issue. Social problems like sexual abuse have entered the healing discourse at an unprecedented level. Canada has also directed a considerable amount of resources towards institutionalizing anti-family violence projects across the country. In the process, it has activated new and/or additional solutions to addressing the problem. Despite its efforts, Canada has not been entirely successful in addressing family violence. Today, there are daily disclosures regarding the scope of family violence within Canadian society. New populations are being identified as being at risk, eg. military wives. The media is reporting on an increasing number of cases of spousal murder. These revelations act as a continuing impetus for Canada and Canadians to persist in their efforts to end this blot on the Canadian landscape.

POLICY ISSUES:

The Family Violence Prevention Division defines family violence as a "serious abuse of power within family, trust or dependency relationships"^{lviii} and it has dealt with child abuse, wife abuse, elder abuse, abuse of people with disabilities, family violence in aboriginal, immigrant, ethno-cultural and visible minority families. However, it admits that very little has been done to address sibling abuse and only one project in Canada has been funded to deal with gay/lesbian relationships. It has only just begun to consider the issue of ritual abuse.

The Family Violence Prevention Division has not placed extraordinary emphasis on the area of ritual abuse. Aboriginal youth because of their desperate search for meaning in their lives may

be at increased risk from this type of abuse. The Native Women's Unity Coalition in Winnipeg spoke about this in their presentation. To quote:

The Coalition believes there is a need for moral, ethical and theological discussion and decision in regards to religious freedom, as we understand religious freedom presently includes Satanism and its practices.

The Coalition is aware and acknowledges that the cruel reality is that, under the guise of religious freedoms, increasing numbers of children are exploited and sexually abused. It is the view of the Coalition as well that what we are seeing in Winnipeg is that increasing numbers of aboriginal children are potentially becoming involved in this whole area of ritual abuse, which is why we want to bring it to the attention now.

Marilyn Fontaine, President
Aboriginal Women's Unity Coalition
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Winnipeg, MAN
92-04-23:110

That the Family Violence Prevention Division's narrow definition of ritual abuse excludes the structural violence that organized religions have inflicted on aboriginal peoples, is an example of the limited application of its policies to aboriginal realities.

Another policy shortcoming of the federal Family Violence Initiative concerns the reconciliation of national policy initiatives with regional and local approaches. Canadian awareness of family violence has been heightened and this, in turn, has influenced the direction Canadian policies have taken. Critics have argued that a national approach to family violence emphasizes what the State wants and therefore fails to address regional and local needs. In response to this issue, Health Canada admits to a preference for funding activities, projects and models which are new, workable, generalizable and knowledge-generating. Having said this, Medical Services Branch and the Department of Indian Affairs fund community-specific activities including the training of personnel who work with aboriginal populations.

The government's propensity to favour the funding of innovative projects can cause problems for aboriginal communities for several reasons. First, the dearth of family violence programs and services in aboriginal communities makes almost any project of this type innovative at least from

the perspective of the aboriginal community. Second, the experience of aboriginal service providers indicate that their communities prefer programs that are built on past experience.

In addition to funding innovative programs, Canada has undertaken many high profile and costly activities to demonstrate its commitment to overcoming the growing problem of family violence.

It has set-up offices, funded fact-finding groups and hired expert advisers. It has created the National Clearing House on Family Violence, appointed individuals like Rix Rogers to advise it on child sexual abuse and more recently completed the work of the Canadian Panel on Violence against Women. Nonetheless, the policy-making aspects of family violence remains fragmented and costly. Furthermore, it has been difficult for ordinary Canadians to keep track of the policies that result from such highly public activities. It is especially unclear as to what extent these activities serve to ameliorate the problem for aboriginal peoples.

There is a pressing need for governments to formulate and implement policies and activities to achieve peaceful lives for all citizens in Canada. Policies that can improve inequities and reduce the odds around aboriginal family violence appear to have evaded government. However, progress may be on the horizon. It is noteworthy that Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba are now developing aboriginal family healing strategies with the assistance of aboriginal peoples. However, just when provinces are demonstrating increased interest in aboriginal programming, it is unfortunate that their efforts may be jeopardized by cuts in social spending.

Changes, now on-going in the national social agenda, dictate that all Canadians exercise the will to maximize the benefits of our scarce financial resources. In the effort made to live within the fiscal realities of this country, one must not lose sight of the achievements that have been gained in confronting family violence in aboriginal communities. Funders and advocates alike must exercise the political will to support those most vulnerable in our populations. The fact is that social pathologies within the aboriginal community continue to increase in magnitude and basic human needs are no more being met today than they have been in the past. There continues to be a unprecedented need for programs which eliminate risk, prevent violence and promote peace in the aboriginal community.

In the future, setting priorities, planning activities and mobilizing resources will have to consider phenomenon like rapid urbanization; the net effects of the absence of traditional values and the social barriers on account of one's ethnicity, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities and age. Governments will also have to increase their efforts to support aboriginal family violence efforts, targeting to Métis communities which are so often left out of the development equation.

If Canada's family violence policy is to be effective, government departments must examine and, where appropriate, modify their policies to ensure that they are consistent with and supportive of federal anti-family violence policy.

When one considers the history of government-aboriginal funding and service interaction, there is little wonder why most aboriginal people see the advent of self-government to be the only way out of the bureaucratic maze.

There is much divisiveness occurring between the major aboriginal groups, First Nation, Métis and Inuit, and their segregation from the larger Canadian society. To improve cooperation between these groups, it is first necessary to find a common rallying point. It would appear that the subject of family violence could be one means of promoting dialogue and joint action since it affects a wide cross-section of both aboriginal and Canadian society.

Despite the historic rifts, aboriginal communities in Canada are coming together more frequently through conferences and national consultations. This strengthens their potential for mutual co-operation and presents a natural way for aboriginal peoples to forge linkages and joint efforts aimed at reducing common social problems like family violence. The current fiscal climate makes joint actions increasingly necessary, governments therefore must be more proactive in promoting efforts aimed at joint co-operation.

To foster mutual-aid and mutual-support, this Commission strongly recommends that the government encourage and support the participation of aboriginal people on advisory groups or government bodies concerned with family violence. Dialogue, research and decision making can be done jointly and effectively with aboriginal groups. The social impacts of family violence dictate that as many people as possible become engaged in its eradication. One of the

immediate benefits of including aboriginal people in a participatory approach is that it secures an increasingly informed public that can play a decisive role in the fight against family violence. An informed public, with little tolerance for such abuse, means that family violence loses its attraction as an acceptable approach to problem resolution. Approaches which facilitate government-aboriginal cooperation will help ensure that governments understand aboriginal service priorities and needs. Finally, by working with aboriginal groups, governments will demonstrate a commitment to improving the quality of life for all their citizens including aboriginal peoples.

The final report of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women entitled Changing the Landscapes - Ending Violence - Achieving Equality calls for governments and communities to initiate zero-tolerance policies. To date, only Manitoba has adopted such a family violence policy with the unintended consequences of severe backlog in its court cases. Some schools are now enacting their own zero-tolerance policies. Despite these positive developments, recommendations, like those of the Canadian Panel of Violence Against Women, are only as good as their implementation. Unfortunately, there has not been a universal buy-in to the goal of zero tolerance. To our knowledge, no aboriginal communities have come out and indicated that they have instituted such a policy.

The federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms, along with provincial human rights acts, ban discrimination based on ethnicity, class, religion, gender, age or race. Nonetheless, human rights advocates say problems remain. Witness the Daviault case, wherein, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a man could not be held responsible for raping a disabled woman because of his state of inebriation. This case outraged women, disabled persons and human rights advocates alike because it appeared to justify or excuse violence. Cases such as this provide another opportunity for greater co-operation among aboriginal peoples and Canadians concerned with forging human rights approaches to ending family, communal and structural violence.

There is a lack of comprehensive data on the incidence of family violence, especially in the aboriginal population. Although cross-sectional, baseline, scientific data is available in places like Statistics Canada on violence directed against women, longitudinal studies on family violence are largely unavailable in Canada. Anecdotal evidence on violence against women is documented in Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence-Achieving Equality , and is a useful

adjunct to Statistics Canada's related data. Without the benefit of an exhaustive search, it would appear that no federal government department has systematically surveyed family violence to determine changes in its rates over time. Suffice to say that lack of appropriate data on family violence has proven to be a major barrier in the development and assessment of policy and programs for Canada, let alone for aboriginal communities.

According to the report Damaged and Needing Help^{lix}, the deficiencies in aboriginal family violence data may stem from aboriginal peoples' refusal to report such incidence. There may be several reasons for this:

- * family violence may have become normalized in the family of community;
- * poor self-esteem, shame and acceptance of violence by the spouse involved;
- * fear that children will be taken away;
- * mandatory charging;
- * lack of faith in the system to do anything;
- * fear of loss of income;
- * selective reporting of abuses;
- * women's scepticism of the system;

This same report goes on to observe that often, agencies and organizations concerned with social issues lack the capability and capacity to collect data. Again, there may be several reasons for this including:

- * lack of mandate/policies;
- * lack of consistent or uniform data indicators to identify family violence;
- * inconsistent data collection and management methods;
- * lack of agency co-ordination; and
- * lack of human resources/effort to document.

The lack of aboriginal controlled surveillance and monitoring systems limits the ability of aboriginal administrators and program planners to develop optimum anti-family violence policies and programs. As funders demand that submissions and proposals contain hard statistics, the lack of data can mean that aboriginal communities get over-looked in the competition for

government funding. If aboriginal control of aboriginal health is to become a reality, governments devolving health and social programming to local control must take steps to ensure that aboriginal communities have the opportunity to develop the information management infrastructure necessary to support effective family violence surveillance and service development.

Aboriginal service managers are beginning to recognize the need for social research in their communities. They see the necessity of obtaining, sharing and employing ethically correct knowledge about family violence. Although, research to investigate family violence levels and workable healing processes, projects and institutions is not presently being carried-out in aboriginal communities, the time has come for this to be encouraged. Naturally, research activities have to be feasible, ethical and policy oriented.

WHY CANADA CANNOT DO IT ALONE:

Aboriginal communities can learn many valuable lessons from Canada's experience in responding to family violence. While Canada had to be cajoled, prodded and occasionally humiliated into responding to this issue, aboriginal leaders and policy makers need not be dragged into action. Aboriginal communities can grasp the impetus and assume a proactive rather than reactive response to the development of anti-family violence policies and programs. As one witness stated:

Should reality dictate that safe houses, crisis centres and second stage housing are needed and those be operated by First Nations communities? Funding for these facilities should not be an issue. All levels of government including First Nations government must continue to prioritize family violence as one of the country's foremost social problems and provide the necessary legislation and financial means for the solution of this problem.

Kula Ellison
Aboriginal Women's Council of Saskatchewan
Aboriginal Women's Local
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Saskatoon, SASK
92-10-28:86

Aboriginal communities can capitalize on heightened aboriginal community awareness of family violence brought about by the mainstream experience. Increased community awareness helps ensure that community members are sensitive to the need for anti-family violence programs and will support their introduction and funding.

While aboriginal populations are a target population under the federal Family Violence Initiative, in many parts of Canada, large segments of the aboriginal population still do not have adequate access to family violence prevention or intervention programs. This may be due to a lack of established programs or the maldistribution of existing family violence resources. Currently federal efforts are being made to reduce the national deficit through a restructuring of social programs and a re-profiling of existing fiscal resources. However, the gaps in aboriginal service needs are real. These two realities poses a major challenge not only to government but to the aboriginal community as well. To ensure comprehensive family-enhancing efforts, aboriginal communities may have to "in-reach" to find some of the needed resources. They will also have to ensure that these resources are used judiciously and effectively.

Canada can assist aboriginal communities to respond to family-violence by maintaining Canada's present emphasis on family violence and by examining current policy, program and funding deficiencies during this period when the federal Family Violence Initiative is undergoing evaluation. Government will have to ensure that national resources are mobilized to meet the demands of those most in need in the aboriginal community so the momentum gained in reducing family violence in this population is not lost. While aboriginal leaders and policy makers can exploit the current environment to introduce programs to meet Canada's and the aboriginal peoples' joint goal of violence-free communities, they cannot do so without funding support from the larger society.

IV.WHY IS FAMILY VIOLENCE IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES A DISTINCT SOCIAL REALITY?

The work of the Commission has brought with it a new period of reckoning for aboriginal peoples. It appears that without a peaceful basis for development, aboriginal communities are imbalanced and families troubled.

The spiritual movement is the most powerful cultural phenomenon in Aboriginal Canada today. For authentic traditionalists, now is the time for renewal; for the opportunists it is more of the same, albeit in the name of spirituality. The social realities in aboriginal communities are elite-led practices that are in desperate need of reconciliation with ordinary people.

Competing groups in aboriginal communities find male leaders intensifying the gaps between the rich and poor and the sexes. Unhealthy relationships are worsened by the lack of well-being and the transmission of social ills within dense kinship networks. Reactionary rhetoric and symbolic gestures pose real problems for women. Framing their "feminism" helps to shed light on their lives, yet their deprivation attests to their lack of full participation in community affairs.

Once again, the sacred search for self, family and community reflected by the people will inform this section of the paper. Men will be included in this process. Mutual duty and obligation and the primal self or "medicine" are at the basis of the moral systems of aboriginal peoples.

MOVING TO THE SOUL OF THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY:

With the dawning of the new millennium, the Canadian social safety net faces many challenges. A revised social policy which supports the redistribution of resources to those most in need will be beneficial, but a major reorientation of people's social responsibilities for self and community would also help. Aboriginal communities are a microcosm of this development.

When concepts such as family violence are explored and described from within, the secrets of "self" are disclosed to those outside. Upon disclosure, concepts supporting self-responsibility are often opposed.^{ix}

People have a tendency to dissociate themselves from their moral obligations to "self" or community. In the same way, many consider the "spirit" to be an abstraction. However, aboriginal people deal comfortably with the concept of "spirit." They apply it to human

relations in the way Dion Stout articulates in her research paper, The Ethical Dimensions of Participatory Development in Reserve Communities. She writes:

- 1) discovery of the centrality of self, especially individual ability or "medicine";
- 2) the transition of individual power to family through values, attitudes, behaviour and institutions;
- 3) extending the family to the broader community and developing agency to connect with more diverse groups of people;
- 4) challenging the existing imbalances between the cultural/structural divide of all peoples of the world; and
- 5) recreating self in solidarity with those who are, those who have been and those who are yet to be.

Despite the fact that many do not live out the concept of *self*-responsibility, the role which it can play in eradicating family violence should not be diminished or overlooked. Because aboriginal societies value *self*-responsibility, it has enormous potential to extend the safety net to the aboriginal victims of family violence. Aboriginal peoples find the concept more congruent with their traditions which recognized and valued *self*-responsibility, as well as, the responsibility of "self" to the family and community. The following figure illustrates this concept.

Source: Maggie Hodgson: Personal Communication

The figure above illustrates a system wherein the individual is urged to accept responsibility for one's own actions while extending *self*-responsibility to the immediate family, next-of-kin, to the reserve community and to the rest of the world. Conversely, there exists a concurrent obligation for other parts of the collective to support the individual and each other. In other words, the morality and the duty and obligation found in community, is at once the domain of the individual and the collective. In this system, "each individual is intensely aware of his accountability for the welfare others, which he must, albeit in his own way and according to dictates of his own conscience, attend to. There is no State, or any omnipotent, generous Deity on which to thrust the satisfaction of human needs - or to blame for hardships."^{lx}

These systems vary in their ability to act for the good of the collective. In this sense, individual aboriginal people are agents of extraordinary levels of bonding. Conversely, they can also be vectors for inflicting extreme trauma on "self" or on others.

WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE AND MORAL REFUGEES

There is intensive and extensive violence in aboriginal communities. Testimony after testimony showed that aboriginal peoples have become increasingly concerned with issues like family violence, even though related research is still lacking to a large degree.

In many ways, their dilemma highlights the push and pull modernization and tradition pose for them. On the one hand, modernization has been atomizing, mechanistic and combative for its followers. On the other hand, a spiritual recovery that employs the power and wisdom of living and spirit beings has helped them deal with family violence.

Violence enters the spirit of every individual, and so it is possible to declare family violence to be endemic in communities.

It is possible to go further and say that the war against family violence is fought in the spirit of every individual in aboriginal communities. However, it finds expression in the living contexts there. Moral refugees have two choices in the matter: fight or flight. Extended families and urbanization are elaborated as examples of what is meant here.

Because aboriginal communities are close-knit, that is, "an Indian on a reserve is really a member of an extended family"^{lxii}, interdependence exists. Problems, therefore, are highly transmissible throughout the entire aboriginal social network. No one, therefore, escapes the misery of family violence.

Since the extended family system plays such an important role in aboriginal society, it soon became obvious that it was necessary to take a critical look at the role it plays in promoting or

hindering community healing. Specifically, the role of extended families as an aboriginal community's source of "greatest strength or greatest weakness" ^{lxiii} will be considered.

In her research, Martens, with helpful insights from Brenda Daily and Maggie Hodgson, found that in dealing with sexual abuse cases, extended families can be a major hindrance especially when the perpetrator is protected by the clan and his or her actions go unreported.

Changing community values, attitudes and behaviours may have led the extended family to abandon some of its ability to combat family violence. As Shkilnyk^{lxiv} points out, some of the traditional roles and responsibilities of the extended family "have been thrust upon an impersonal bureaucracy" leaving the central government, not the kinship network, in charge of "enforcing morality and codes of behaviour."

It is important to discuss the relationship between family violence and marginalization. It is generally held that upwards of forty percent of First Nations people have migrated to large urban centres like Winnipeg, Vancouver and Toronto. While non-status Indians live in all parts of the province, one senses that they tend to concentrate in urban areas. Alberta has Métis settlements, and like the non-status Indians, most Métis also gravitate to towns and cities. Inuit migration to urban areas is also on the increase.

THE DILEMMA OF ABORIGINAL FEMINISM:

Aboriginal women have depicted themselves as nurturers of families and keepers of cultures. At a time when many aboriginal peoples are confusing womanhood with feminism, thoughtful, diverse women helped people make sense of the feminism they believe in. The feminism that aboriginal women adhere to rejects that of their mainstream counterparts. The over-emphasis on personal success and achievement and the saying "it will be because of me" is not what aboriginal women believe in. Unlike their non-aboriginal sisters, being equal under law is not enough for them as they press for economic and political equality. Aboriginal women's feminism is different as well because they do not see motherhood as basically inferior while waged labour is superior. Many aboriginal women do not see the power of men the lone tool of female domination because such a view creates a men-centred society where women are

dispossessed as historical agents. Rather aboriginal feminists assert that women's oppression is best understood in terms of the larger domination of all men and women.

In light of reprehensible levels of violence inflicted upon aboriginal women by aboriginal men, it seems that practising aboriginal feminism is full of contradictions and conflicts. Some aboriginal feminists maintain that family violence has come about as the natural outcome of substance abuse and over-crowded housing. Others argue that "it is women who bear the sons and have major roles in the upbringing" and so we "are at fault in creating our own oppression."^{lxv} Others maintain that the introduction of mainstream values into aboriginal communities has led to the demise of traditions like honouring women and cooperation between the sexes. Above all, aboriginal women are often told that challenging the oppression of women betrays their womanhood and it diverts attention from the larger and implicitly more important agenda of self-government.

THE GREAT CULTURAL REVIVAL:

In producing this report, it becomes very clear that "we" rather than "me" was the traditional concept among aboriginal peoples.^{lxvi}

What is being suggested here is that aboriginal societies measure the personal worth of individuals on their ability to contribute to the broad goals of the family and community. Not living by this code renders individual achievement meaningless, but it can also lead to the spiritual bankruptcy of the individual.

In other words, an aboriginal world view focuses on the concept of "medicine." This view recognizes the power of each and every person. It also suggests that power is not given or taken away and that every individual is empowered by his or her unique talents and capabilities or "medicine."^{lxvii}

V.ABORIGINAL WAYS CONTROL AND END FAMILY VIOLENCE

TIMELESS PHILOSOPHY AND CONCEPTS

Currently, most aboriginal peoples prefer policies that emphasize traditions. Therefore, the policies they construct transcend the bureaucratic, reasoned models of problem solving and decision-making. This suggests that aboriginal policies often may be unwritten. When government officials have to negotiate with representatives from aboriginal communities regarding family violence projects, they are no longer surprised by the liberal use of traditional expressions and practices at meetings. In fact, most aboriginal negotiators are just as comfortable with bureaucratic idioms, and easily adopt the two communication styles. The

point here is that aboriginal peoples have adopted a method for problem solving and decision-making which reflects the traditional and modern paths of development. However, traditional knowledge, principles and values prevail in priority setting and policy making even amid the complexities of doing business with government and the adversities marking communities. Knowing this, special emphasis is placed on four principles that condition policy development on family violence in aboriginal communities.

Holism:

This term permeates aboriginal discourse today. It is a concept which connects "being" and "becoming" fully with one's total environment rather than reducing life's meaning to "totality of self". The structures, functions and systems that mediate between "self" and one's environment gain paramountcy in a holistic approach. In a paper submitted to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples titled Violence Against Aboriginal Women, Evelyn Zellerer^{lxviii} writes:

One critical theme which runs through material presented by aboriginal peoples is that a holistic approach which is community-based is necessary. The first key word is "holistic". This means that attention must be paid to all aspects of being: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. A holistic approach also means looking at "the individual in the context of the family; the family in the context of the community; the community in the context of the larger society (Frank, 1992:8). Thus services and programmes cannot just be developed for individuals but must be directed at families in communities and society as a whole.

To explain the causative factors of family violence many aboriginal peoples refer to the interrelatedness of all things and all peoples. To quote Martha Flaherty, the President of Pauktuutit: "There are many reasons for family violence. High unemployment, poor housing, child abuse, drug abuse - these have led to a loss of culture - which has in turn led violence against ourselves and our loved ones."^{lxix}

Medicine Wheel

As previously mentioned, the Medicine Wheel is a popular aboriginal pedagogical symbol. As illustrated below, it incorporates social, cultural, political and economic realities.

Soul Searching:

The previous sections of this report discussed aboriginal peoples' belief in "self" and "self-responsibility." They also believe in the responsibility of "self" to family, next of kin, and community. These concepts have caused many aboriginal people to reflect on the both the cause and prevention of family violence. This soul searching has led many to conclude that this problem is "within" and not "outside." To quote one aboriginal woman "we are both the cause and the solution to our own problems." According to Margaret Eagle of Yellowknife such changes in attitude are a prerequisite to ending family violence. She stated:

When I worked for the Secretary of State, we used to call it attitudinal change and that is what is required out there as well as when you are dealing with such issues as family violence and other social problems that are the result of attitudes, be it in the court system or up in our bureaucracy or in the legislature or anywhere else, for that matter. Attitudes have to change.

Margaret Eagle
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Yellowknife, NWT

Vision:

Getting the right policy and program mix regarding family violence in aboriginal communities is a difficult task. As previously noted, aboriginal communities need forward-thinking strategies. For some communities this may be moving from the "darkness to light" and it means putting a "face" to family violence and recognizing that its victims are not just their neighbours but themselves.

Transformation:

Despite their ever-present social problems like family violence, aboriginal communities are undergoing a change in energy wherein whole communities have become knowledgeable about spiritual teachings and healing. This has allowed individuals other than recognized elders to project an ethos all our own. This radical change is shaping the behaviour of aboriginal peoples. According to Reverend Walter Edmunds of Happy Valley, Newfoundland, renewed spirituality may offer hope. To quote:

And as we find ourselves in a period of transition, in a period of relationship that is mostly political and social, I think it becomes more and more important for us to recognize that one of the answers, at least one of the answers to the problems that we face as a people, whether they be substance and alcohol abuse, or family violence, or whatever, rests with our spirituality. And I would hope that in recognizing ourselves as members of part of the Christian church, particularly as members of the Moravian church, that we will find in that relationship and that membership some of the answers that we so desperately seek to turn our society around in many ways.

Reverend Walter Edmunds, Happy Valley
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Happy Valley, NFLD
92-06-16

Some aboriginal people are finding their spirituality in organized churches while others are turning to age-old traditions. As already stated, aboriginal communities are undergoing a cultural renewal. No matter where aboriginal people find it, spiritual renewal offers one possible path out of the abyss created by social problems such as family violence.

Aboriginal peoples are currently developing and actualizing agendas for social transformation, primarily through cultural and spiritual recovery. This agenda, however, has many dimensions

including that of self-government. Self-government can aid in social transformation by enabling aboriginal people to command their own destinies.

Defensive Investment:

Based on the findings of the Commission, state institutions, aboriginal leadership and the Church have to assess the total net worth of ending family violence. Weighing the extent to which family violence exacts a price on the quality of life of aboriginal people is the first step in defensive investment. Ultimately, these institutions will have to decide how much they will invest, if anything, in preventing further community disintegration. One recommendation regarding the role of the church came from the Sept-Iles Women's Centre:

On the subject of the Church, we can say that the Church has played an important role in bringing us to the situation in which we find ourselves today. Because of the Church, we have lost many of our values. I think that if the church wanted to help repair the damage that has been done to us, it could apologize to us. However, that is not really sufficient, because too many people have been traumatized. Many have had their lives ruined.

We know that the Church has a great deal of money. It could send money to the Aboriginal communities, and these funds could help, in one way or another, to develop aid programs in the communities. This money could be used, for example, to build a hostel or to develop a program of therapy for the perpetrators of violence and their victims.

Delima Niquay
Manawan Council of Women
Royal Commission Public Hearings
Manowane-t, QUE
92-12-03:270

VALUES UNDERLYING COMMUNITY ACTION:

All the aboriginal peoples who came forward to talk about the issue of family violence revealed. There is so much hurt out there. Yet, there is the tremendous will and ability people to do away with this problem.

As usual, aboriginal people have relied heavily on simple human measures to make the difference. Their ways of tackling issues may be as basic as "letting go and letting God." Domestic terrorism has taught them to seize every small advantage to shift power. A telephone call for help will do this for them, as will participation in a healing circle. Rightly or wrongly, they are also calling for more safe houses and healing centres, rather than safe neighbourhoods or communities.

For the most part though, aboriginal people are improvising with low-cost, non-technological ways of dealing with family violence. Much of their work is taking place through formal organizations. Central to their actions are the values they cling to. This then is the perspective the Commissioners took to look at the initiatives aboriginal people are involved in. Clearly, values top and underpin their work in the area of family violence.

*** Healing:**

For aboriginal peoples, healing is a celebration of survival and it is the ability to cope with one's human condition. It is a lifetime process that reduces the harmful effects of systemic and personal violence. The growing concern among aboriginal peoples over exploitation and repression characterizing much of their lives, whether it be from rapid change and living problems, has accelerated the adoption of healing as a preventative, supportive and rehabilitative measure.

Hobbema is the collective name for the Ermineskin First Nation, Montana First Nation, Samson First Nation and Louis Bull First Nation. Hobbema is a resource-rich community whose members have received generous monthly payments from oil royalties for years. Yet, people from there testified at the R.C.A.P. hearings about their community's notorious reputation: Hobbema is the third most violent and crime-oriented society in Alberta. The community is constantly dealing with suicides, homicides and violent deaths from accidents. Presently, the community is gathering information to try to determine the breeding grounds for violence. The sudden influx of money has been a problem, and relationships have been hit hard but Hobbema struggles on towards a better life, through healing, for its members.

Labrador is seen as disadvantaged because it lacks the resources communities like Hobbema have. Despite this, the Nain Women's Group runs an effective resource centre for women and children. It is a day drop-in centre which donates funds and clothing. It refers clients to professional care, where necessary, and pays special attention to northern issues like suicide and isolation. The focus here is for healing of the relatively disadvantaged members of the aboriginal community.

Even though it is a regional group which is urban-based, the Council of Women of Quebec deals with direct and indirect forms of violence. At one level, it is concerned with child sexual abuse. At another, it deals with systemic forces like the Indian Act. It does this through the Quebec Native Women's Association. The Onetoken Treatment Centre is one of its partners. In the process of carrying-out its work, the Council integrates social problems into its mental health strategy and it provides support programs for counsellors and helpers.

*** Helping:**

Healing, however, does not stop or begin with good coping abilities. It also includes the presence of powerful obligations among community members to help each other. Aboriginal peoples consider personal awareness of such obligations to be crucial to sustaining life. Therefore, it is of vital importance to align policies and programs as closely as possible with existing relationships. When aboriginal communities search for helping formulas around family violence, discussion on its damaging effects and healing possibilities and responsibilities enter the dialogue. Co-action is also vital to helping.

The Aboriginal Women's Unity Coalition of Winnipeg (A.W.U.C.C.) is an umbrella association for five urban, service-oriented native organizations. This women's organization helped to break the silence about the sexual abuse aboriginal and non-aboriginal men were systematically waging against young aboriginal women.

They also publicly opposed political meddling in sexual abuse cases. The unintended consequence of their actions was to involve men in the family violence debate. They also demonstrate local resourcefulness by holding vigils for victims of violence.

This Women's Coalition recognizes that there is more power in a united front so they support member groups like Ma Mawi Chi Ita Centre and Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The former is an urban resource centre concerned with families and children. This Centre has often been referred to as a model operation because it functions by inter-agency co-operation. It works closely with the private sector, namely the Laidlaw Foundation. It is a model operation also because it provides training and traditional teachings.

The second member of A.W.U.C.C. is a women's centre which has 20 beds for short term shelter and housing. Counselling services are provided around the clock along with daily sharing circles. This centre exists because of voluntary associations. It also works closely with other aboriginal and non-aboriginal support services. It recognizes the special needs of the individuals had who have to flee from domestic terrorism and adopts a phased approach to providing shelter.

Like their sister organizations in Manitoba, Equay Wuk is an urban-based, woman-focused group in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. This organization provides frontline services and prevention programs for women and children who have sought refuge from abuse. Once there, the woman are given the voice and space to talk about their problems and to share solutions to these. This process allows the women to learn coping skills by helping one another.

*** Peace:**

Peace is essential for individual and collective productivity and well-being. However, incidents of family violence continue to be highly prevalent among aboriginal groups. Rising incidents of communal violence are adding to the anxiety levels of aboriginal peoples. This has a two-fold cause, for most also feel the tensions with the non-aboriginal community as well. Aboriginal people narrow-down community disintegration to the need for peace; peace being both relative to human relations and an absolute state of community wellness.

Commissioner Pearl Keenan is a well known elder and peacemaker from the Yukon. When she presented to the Commission hearings, she stressed that it is familiarity with traditions that is the key to peace. She cited clan systems as an example of what she meant. Focussing on the positive aspects of life and integrating elders in family violence programming is what she stands for. Rhoda Karatek, an Inuit elder, also appeared in front of the Commissioners and her

peacemaking message concerned the abuse of elders in the homes. For her, tensions between generations test traditions but despite this, every effort must be made to recognize and applaud the coping skills of elders.

The gentle teachings of elders are all about peace but there are practical examples of peacekeeping efforts. In Hagwilet, B.C., a rural, First Nations community, peacekeepers are trained to ensure greater safety and security of residents. As the peacekeepers address social problems, they work with the mainstream and hereditary justice systems. Although, it is a non-aboriginal agency, the Crime Prevention Unit in Regina serves aboriginal clientele. This Unit is community controlled and runs four programs. The Woman Alone Program, Citizens Police Academy, Elder Abuse Program and Neighbourhood Watch allows aboriginal people in Regina access at the same time as healthy relationships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal groups are encouraged and cultivated.

*** Space:**

To gain peace, aboriginal peoples need to be part of the cultural whole. Space picks up on the poignant notion of freedom, suggesting that it reflects quests of a high order. The pressing problem of family violence can be viewed as a desperate struggle to adjust to difficult circumstances. Having political, economic, cultural and social space is of vital importance in any case. Space encourages free, spiritual and equal relations in aboriginal communities however these take shape in life.

Communities harbour space for thinking and action. Often, formal aboriginal organizations become communities without walls. For instance, the Society of Friends Against Family Violence is a coalition of concerned citizens. Although this group is based in Inuvik, it plays an advocacy role for women in remote communities across the Northwest Territories. It works with all three aboriginal groups and its work is done by aboriginal helpers and professionals. It recognizes that family violence has no ethnic boundaries and identifies gaps in local services. It has noted that counselling services and shelters in remote areas are sadly needed.

The Indian Homemakers' Association in B.C. is a regional organization focussed on the socio-economic issues women face. It emphasizes human resource development, serving

women inmates and women residing in urban areas and First Nations. It is a noteworthy organization because it mobilizes resources to those who are hardest to reach and uses approaches the women understand. In a similar fashion, the Ontario Native Women's Association, a non-government organization, promotes healthy families by concentrating its efforts on women and children. By according women and children political and social space as a matter of principle, it gained the trust of women across the province. This helped it to research rates of family violence and in 1989, it completed a benchmark study called "Breaking Free: A Proposal For Change For Family Violence". In many ways, this study is the spark that has ignited the move towards ending family violence in the aboriginal communities.

If this study began a process for favourable changes for aboriginal women, then the crucial document, "No More Secrets: Acknowledging the Problem of Child Sexual Abuse in Inuit Communities" produced by Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association, did as much. It acknowledged the problem of child sexual abuse among the Inuit in the Northwest Territories, Quebec and Labrador. This Inuit Women's Association created a space for ending child sexual abuse. It recognized that the writing of a report on these issues would be a first step towards healing. In the report, Inuit women explain legal reporting requirements in provinces and territories. By doing so, the report gave back a lasting gift to the women who told their stories in it.

*** Hope:**

The success of fighting family violence depends on designing forward-looking strategies aimed at understanding rights as the product of human choice and values. This understanding becomes balanced by the perception that everyone has free and equal opportunities to provide for themselves and loved ones, even though they are considered high-risk and the poorest of the community. Taking into considerations the evolution of self-government, a long term goal in the area of family violence is that each human be respected as a special and indispensable creation.

The Métis Women of Manitoba have a regional mandate to bring hope to Métis women. They do this by encouraging awareness of the Métis culture. To further underline their understanding of the social problems as multifaceted, they monitor the social needs of people, like elders, in

urban areas. They also tend to the recreation needs of the youth and raise funds locally. By emphasizing identity as an intangible source of hope, they give themselves an impetus to act on social issues like family violence.

A sister organization, the La Ronge Native Women's Council, in northern Saskatchewan looks after the needs of rural Métis women. The Council provides training on family violence issues, helps small surrounding communities and works with other services, like shelters, in the area. It has made gains because it recognizes the unique needs of the workers who themselves come from the same adverse environments as the people they are giving hope to. The Council offers hope to the next generations because it educates children about functional healthy families.

Meanwhile, Unity House in Fort McMurray, Alberta addresses the moral issue of family violence within a clinical framework. It is a crisis shelter, which is urban-based and accommodates 21 women and children for 21 days. It has 36 volunteers on staff and works closely with the local Friendship Centre. It runs a Native liaison worker program. Hope is instilled through voluntarism and maternal/child interventions. In the Fredericton area, the Gignoo Native Transition House provides a safe crisis shelter for women and children running from abuse. They have found that more social services are needed in different parts of the province. Training and education for workers are seen to be continuing requirements.

*** Life:**

Clearly, high morbidity rates adversely affect living and life prospects in aboriginal communities. Family violence is demographically expressed there as are other social ills. Despite this, human development is not about what resources aboriginal communities possess rather it is how they use these resources. Are aboriginal people protagonists and purveyors of life for all, that is the critical question.

Resourcefulness is a mark of aboriginal people's development and survival. When she spoke to the Commission, June Delisle share a heart-warming story about a parent-led initiative in Kahnawake. It is called Karihwanoran and Katsitsi:io and it is for the benefit of children. Parents are running a flower shop business to raise money to set-up a school for pre-schoolers. Through their self-reliance, these parents have given a new meaning to prevention and

promotion. By harnessing the commitment of a few, they will promote healthy lives for many families, perhaps for generations.

Likewise, the Manitoba Justice Inquiry, a provincial initiative, asked some very hard questions about the quality of life aboriginal women had. This inquiry which included Murray Sinclair, a Métis man, showed that aboriginal men discriminate against aboriginal women. It also pointed at the weaknesses in the justice system which continue to make life unbearable for aboriginal peoples. By virtue of its work, this Inquiry reminds us that family violence needs to be fought on many fronts, with woman playing a central role.

The Headlines Theatre Company in Vancouver has been restring hope into people's lives through three dimensional legends presented as popular theatre. They produced "Power Play: Out of Silence" and presented it across B.C. As well, week-long workshops based on the play were conducted and "how-to" manuals based on the play were produced and handed out. This theatre company successfully combined traditions and innovation as an approach to dealing with family violence.

The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation is another giant in the annals of restoring social systems in aboriginal communities. Although it is based in Ottawa, it serves the Inuit in the North. It has produced public service announcements on child sexual abuse in Inuktitut and these messages have reached into Inuit homes all across the North. High technology has become a culturally accepted institution and symbol for people like the Inuit who live in remote areas.

*** Oneself As Other:**

Recognizing the unserved misfortunes of others and the social constructs that bring them about, has long been a central value in aboriginal cultures. Controlling or ending family violence is possible when people's dissatisfaction with another's pain provides the impetus to change moral systems. Further, authentic traditionalism can no longer be the exclusive opinion of a select few. Even though there is an unprecedented level of deference to the Creator today, somehow this is often too big a step for dealing with family violence. The more immediate concerns link individuals with their diverse roots and relatives so they can "find themselves" in peaceful families and communities.

Growing older is one of the life stages to which aboriginal peoples have to look forward to. It follows as sure as fall follows summer. The Native Canadian Centre in Toronto is an urban-based organization which is serving aboriginal peoples who have relocated there. One of its most significant, recent undertakings concerns elders. The Centre is developing an elder abuse prevention program which will create knowledge about this social problem. It will also propose intervention priorities and programs.

In the same Canadian city, the Mooka' Am Program is thriving as a model initiative. It is an urban program which provides homeless youth and marginalized women and children some respite from the cares of life. Many are products of forced separations and personal losses. While they are in this program, aboriginal peoples benefit from traditional approaches to healing. The Program has also been evaluating its work in the field of family violence. It is now developing a quantitative and qualitative impact study on their work in child sexual abuse.

The Family Violence and Child Care Committee of New Brunswick: Indian Women's Council is provincially co-ordinated and is meant to improve women's well-being. This women's group enjoys overwhelming support from the leadership and have been involved in critical events like the suicide crisis at the Big Cove First Nation. As a part of their efforts, they have set policy directions for survivors and victims of family violence.

THE BENEFITS OF USING CULTURALLY ACCEPTABLE INSTITUTIONS AND SYMBOLS:

The aboriginal community is undergoing a traditional, cultural and spiritual renewal. This renewal has led people to observe that healing circles, sweat lodges and elders are becoming institutional cornerstones in prisons, alcohol and drug treatment centres, and educational centres.^{lxx} Today, almost every aboriginal gathering includes some form of spirituality.

As tradition assumes new political, economic and social dimensions, it becomes important to establish who the traditionalists are. Obvious people include elders, traditional healers and participants in ceremonial sundances, sweat lodges and pipe ceremonies. These are individuals

for whom spirituality has become the major resource for reconnecting to "self" and humanity. Elders often mediate this experience.

Aboriginal peoples see elders as living treasures. That is, they are the "soul" of the aboriginal experience. Their wisdom is seen as coming from deep within their being and it reaches into the past to link contemporary aboriginal peoples with their ancestors and their traditions.^{lxxi} In today's aboriginal community, elders are not necessarily old; rather they are individuals who are seen to have many gifts. They are also looked to as oral historians, teachers, cultural workers, ecologists, environmentalists and healers. While the wisdom of elders is now enjoying recognition world-wide, it is the practical and extraordinary sensitivity they show to the intricacies of the natural world which garners them the admiration of their aboriginal and non-aboriginal followers.

It is easy to see why aboriginal peoples see elders as valuable community member. Elders help to validate and affirm aboriginal society in all its aspects. Allocating communal rights and responsibilities to individuals with the full expectation that these will be exercised in due course and with due respect to others is a well developed notion of what elders do.

Aboriginal cultures dictate that healing not stop or begin with the personal acquisition of coping skills. With the aboriginal community, there is a powerful obligation for community members to reach beyond their own personal pain to help one another. As Peggy Bird notes, "many of the social problems occurring within our communities can be greatly reduced if we make a systematic effort to help our people heal their personal pain."^{lxxii} Aboriginal peoples consider personal awareness of such obligations to be in keeping with tradition and the "Indian" way of life. In formulating family violence policies and intervention programs, it is important we remain cognizant of the emphasis that aboriginal peoples place on concepts of mutual-aid and mutual support.

The inclusion of culture and tradition into aboriginal healing practices has made it much easier for aboriginal people to seek out healing. Aboriginal people have come to see healing as a celebration of survival and triumph over one's human condition. Healing is now being viewed as a life time process that helps them cope with the harmful effects of both structural and personal violence. In this context, healing has moved beyond its relevance to just the individual,

as aboriginal people are now talking in terms of the healing of whole families, and has touched communities and nations.

Balance, peace and harmony are central to aboriginal belief systems and the maintenance of personal and community well-being. Failure to live in balance and in harmony can cause an individual to become unwell in spirit and body. Failure to live in balance and harmony can also kill the spirit of the whole communities and nations. For an individual, community or nation to restore harmony, peace and balance, it first must be free from the tyranny of violence.

Recognizing the misfortunes of others and the social constructs that bring these misfortunes about has long been a central value in aboriginal cultures. Controlling or ending family violence is possible when people's dissatisfaction with another's pain provides the impetus to alter moral systems; and authentic traditionalism can no longer be the exclusive domain of a select few. Even though aboriginal peoples express deference to the Creator, somehow this is too big a step for dealing with family violence. More immediate interventions concern organically linking aboriginal people with their diverse roots so they can find themselves in peaceful families and communities.

VI. POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION:

UNRESOLVED ISSUES:

The benefits of using traditional approaches to healing family violence have been well documented in this report. Witnesses spoke of how the use of elders, traditional healers and healing lodges have helped individuals and whole communities embark on their healing journey. Despite the acknowledged merits of these approaches, one would be remiss if one also did not acknowledge the fact that witnesses also talked of how unscrupulous persons have attempted to misuse the sanctity of aboriginal beliefs, values and practices for their own unethical purposes. Since abuse comes in many guises and can also cloak itself in the mantle of tradition, people need to use their commonsense in choosing their helpers and helping institutions. While respecting aboriginal traditions, people must ensure that when they employ elders, healing circles, sweat lodges, and traditional healers they do so with a healthy sense of self-esteem.

It will be recommended that care-givers carefully evaluate the benefits of referring clients to programs and services that advertize themselves as using so-called "traditional" approaches in treatment. When choosing service models, care-givers may wish to ask:

- Can this client benefit from a traditional treatment approach? Is his/her belief system congruent with those employed by the program or would he/she be better off attending a more clinical or westernized model?
- What specific "traditional" approach is the program offering? What training do the care-givers have that make them qualified to deliver these "traditional" approaches?
- Are these care-givers known to the aboriginal community? What is their reputation?
- If it is a formalized program, what safeguards does it employ regarding client confidentiality? Does the program have guidelines regarding care-giver and client relations?
- Does the traditional healer employ coercive methods such as requiring the client to provide the healer with gifts or money in return for protection against "bad medicine"?
- Does the program or care-giver foster dependency in any form?

- Does the client have enough knowledge regarding traditional approaches to know what is "acceptable" behaviour on the part of the care-giver?

Most importantly, the referring care-giver should maintain on-going contact with the client to ensure he/she is receiving adequate care.

The hearings showed that even prior to the establishment of the Family Violence Initiative, aboriginal communities had introduced efforts to end family violence and foster healthier lifestyles for those affected. A key focus of these programs has been on strengthening and developing local helping systems. On one hand, aboriginal communities have directed their efforts at supporting the development and maintenance of formal helping systems. On the other hand, informal support systems such as volunteer groups have been revalidated and bolstered. Local helping systems must continue to be supported in their effort to act as facilitators and arbitrators between the community and external governments and agencies.

At another level, aboriginal helping systems must guard against emulating those of the dominant culture. As communities become more self-governing, pressure will mount on aboriginal governments to demonstrate, without question, a different style of program management and administration than what was previously known under the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development or Health Canada. They will be called upon to ensure that they do not become over bureaucratized. They must take care "especially to ensure that the rewards of self-government accrue not just to a privileged Indian elite or middle class, well-positioned to 'cash in' on the new opportunities, but also to the Indian proletariat".^{lxxiii} Unfortunately, at this early stage of their development, it seems at least to some community members that aboriginal leaders have appropriated and recombined mainstream ideology to create bureaucratic orders analogous to the ones they claim to transcend. In Nagata's words:

Grass-roots organizations such as band and tribal councils, follow the same bureaucratic path of simplifying, narrowing, reducing, and thereby destroying the people's own concrete and vibrant (if somewhat messy) life experiences.^{lxxiv}

There is an urgent need to ensure existing aboriginal social programs become more efficient and effective. The fact remains that Canada's social safety net is eroding and all Canadians are

feeling squeezed by taxes and falling incomes. Current times demand that aboriginal administrators and managers pay increased attention to maximizing program and service productivity, achieving qualitative and quantitative service outcomes and enhancing local capacity-building.

Family violence exacts an ordinate toll on the quality of life in all aboriginal communities, but aboriginal communities have access to resources in differing degrees. Resources will always be limited. There will never be enough to do all the things that must be done. In the end, it may not be about what resources aboriginal communities possess rather how they use these resources.

The question for aboriginal communities is whether existing resource are being used to their best advantage. Are they targeting those most in need? Are they being used to promote improvements in the quality of life and to reinforce and support the human potential of all aboriginal people? Adjusting local aboriginal family violence interventions so they are brought to the very soul of aboriginal communities remains a functional imperative of all aboriginal leaders and program managers.

The success in fighting family violence depends on aboriginal communities ability to design forward-looking strategies aimed at providing individuals and communities with hope and the belief that they can move beyond their current circumstances. Instilling hope in individuals and communities requires that aboriginal governments demonstrate that people can exercise choices without fear of physical harm or intimidation. These forward-looking strategies mean that in the evolution of self-government, steps must be taken to institutionalize or constitutionalize those values which respect the rights of individuals to exercise choice and to live up to their full potential.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

VII. MAKING LASTING CHANGES: WHAT WE WANT DONE AND BY WHOM

This report has looked at the relationships between family violence and aboriginal development from many angles. A major shift in thinking and actions is necessary if family violence is to be ended. Old structures in this new approach are unacceptable because these stand in the way of change just as much as old thoughts and actions do. It is also vital to recognize where ideas for change come from and that change comes about from constant struggle and resistance. In the end, family violence is tied to the moral systems in aboriginal communities.

Through months of meeting and talking with aboriginal peoples, it became evident that they have learned tough life lessons from "the school of broken windows". Therefore, a special effort has been made to give voice to their issues, struggles and triumphs around family violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It has been decided that the very terms "on-the-ground", "grass-roots" and "community-based" suggest there are other levels to be considered when setting out to stop family violence. Therefore, governments, churches, Canadian society and aboriginal peoples share the responsibility of making aboriginal communities safe, happy and productive. All remedial efforts must be oriented to the communities and they must pay attention to the following key directions.

- assign greater importance to family violence in social policy and the development process;
- improve local capacities for assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating family violence initiatives;

- reduce disparities in family violence rates and helping systems;
- concentrate resources on workable intervention strategies; and
- encourage more co-operation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal groups and among aboriginal groups.

In keeping with the general thrusts of these key directions, the Commission underscores the relations between the main issues aboriginal peoples identified and the policy orientations now at work. With these in mind it will be recommended:

1. That all aboriginal communities and their respective organizations join forces with governments at all levels and in all places to improve the relative position of family violence in their agendas in order to promote healthy families by:
 - retaining the Family Violence Initiative beyond 1995 and expanding its activities and coverage of the relatively disadvantaged and improving its co-ordination at the national level; and
 - incorporating elements for controlling and ending family violence into the objectives of self-government especially in light of reduced public spending and social policy reforms.

2. That all governments, institutions and peoples who have a stake in the development of aboriginal peoples link family violence with development and assist aboriginal communities to draw up proposals to find appropriate ways to deal with family violence, the social issues as a common enterprise by:
 - directing funders to streamline funding by integrating provinces into the process;
 - encouraging informal community resources to play a greater role through volunteerism;
 - encouraging effective linkages between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples through higher degree of inter-institutional and inter-sectoral co-operation;
 - paying more attention to human resource and labour issues around family violence;

- increasing the awareness of the limits of external resourcing for social problems so communities can employ "in-reach" and outreach approaches which may include the private sector and the Church;
 - providing care for the care-giver;
 - working with the National Association of Friendship Centres to determine the impact of rapid urbanization;
 - promoting dialogue and joint action between groups at a conference based on the theme of zero-tolerance; and
 - examining the merits of legislation, human rights provisions and social policies together.
3. That all governments, institutions and peoples who have a stake in the development of aboriginal peoples focus action on the high risk stages of aboriginal people's lifetimes and conditions in order to mobilize resources to areas of greatest need by:
- mobilizing human, technical and financial resources to help those most in need and to improve their prospects for self-reliance and self-determination;
 - developing standardized methodologies and techniques to evaluate the high risk stages and social conditions of aboriginal communities;
 - concentrating resources aimed at changing living conditions and eliminating risk factors within emerging self-government structures;
 - treating and managing the family as a community unit where inequalities based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, class, disability and sexual orientation are accounted for and not tolerated;
 - strengthening institutional capacity to mobilize resources for the promotion and development of women and children;
 - revising and reforming policies, programs and services that affect men's access to healing places and opportunities; and
 - consider conditions like rapid urbanization, isolation in rural communities, new and emerging value systems, addictions and cultural revival.

4. That Métis, Inuit and First Nation leaders everywhere work actively towards eliminating risks, preventing violence, and promoting peace in the communities they call their own by:
 - linking policies for ending or controlling violence to restructuring governance;
 - supporting healing priorities and strategies through moral and material incentives;
 - orienting family violence to include communal violence;
 - recognizing communities in crises and banning developments like ethnic and social cleansing;
 - supporting the establishment of a human rights watch for aboriginal communities;
 - asking the federal/provincial governments to commit to a longitudinal study of aboriginal communities and family/communal violence; and
 - maintaining funding for family violence as fair, equitable and deliverable in timely fashion.

5. That aboriginal peoples consider the relationship between violence, religion and spirituality, and that they encourage recourse to sound cultural support systems to end family violence by:
 - moving away from high-profile, costly interventions and redirecting efforts to community support systems like elders, healing circles, etc.;
 - employing timeless concepts, values, beliefs, traditions and everyday forms of resistance as catalysts for change;
 - locating family violence in the community context and recognizing that family situations are changing and that more than ever, family must be extended to community;
 - extend the safety net for family violence victims by promoting self-responsibility, self-help and self-care;

- bolstering traditions which deepen the understanding of human relations and the interdependence of peoples and the spill-over affect of family violence so attitudes can be changed;
 - participating in social movements that will de-centre the power sites in communities;
 - calling on governments to make better use of funds as building the capacity of community members becomes paramount; and
 - developing components of regulations and standards of surveillance of alternative helping systems especially as new organizational and service models emerge in the community.
6. That the governments, aboriginal leaders, academic and private sectors work together to create, distribute and manage knowledge on family violence by:
- recognizing community members as the best researchers, and that they will control the research process and own it ultimately;
 - stimulating technical and technological capabilities in site analysis and research skills in aboriginal communities so they can document the nature and magnitude of risks;
 - encouraging all communities to formulate research policies and strategies showing the need to build healthy families by the year 2000; and
 - encouraging all communities to have strategies in place by the year 2000 for using knowledge produced by government and/or the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

ENDNOTES

- i. Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus define mediating structures as "those institutions standing between the individual in his (sic) private life and the large institutions of public life". Mediating structures include neighbourhoods, families, churches and voluntary associations: Berger, J and R. J. Neuhaus, "To Empower People" in People Centred Development David Korten and Rudi Klauss (eds.), 19 p.
- ii. In his testimonial at an Royal Commission Public Hearing in Iqaluit, N.W.T. (92-05-25), Bill Riddell of Iqaluit stated: " Aboriginal people should be careful to design knowledge as to the real nature and the extent of social problems, rather than research which is designed to gather information which results in being able to sell a particular approach to a social problem."
- iii. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Focusing the Dialogue, Public Hearings Discussion Paper #2, April 1993.
- iv. Canada, House of Commons, The War Against Women, Report of the Standing committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women, June 1991, p. 49.
- v. Quebec (Province) Ministre de la sante et des services sociaux, Services Formation-Research Domestic Violence in Aboriginal Communities: Reference Manual 1991 p. i.
- vi. Province of Ontario, Generations to Come: The Time is Now: A Strategy for Aboriginal Family Healing, A Final Report of the Aboriginal Family Healing Joint Steering Committee, Ontario Ministry of Health, prepared September 1993, p.
- vii. For a larger discussion of silence on child sexual abuse - see: Pauktuutit, No More Secrets: Acknowledging the Problem of Child Sexual Abuse in Inuit Communities , Pauktuutit 1991 Ottawa.
- viii. Dolores T. Poelzer and Irene Poelzer, In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Métis Women Speak Out, Saskatoon: Lindenblatt and Hamonic, 1986, Chapter 6

& 7.

- ix. Lousie Holfe, "Web" in Aboriginal Voices, Volume 2, No. 1, 1995 p. 22.
- x. Poelzer, D.T. and I. Poelzer, Ibid1 p. 48.
- xi. Penny Petrone, "I Fought to Keep My Hair," in Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English Ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988 pp. 274-275.
- xii. Rix Rogers Reaching Solutions: the Report of the Special Advisor to the Minister of Health and Welfare on Child Sexual Abuse 1990, p. 105.
- xiii. Carol La Prairie and Bruce Steinke, Seen But Not Heard: Native People in the Inner City, Department of Justice 1994, p. vi.
- xiv. Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence - Achieving Equality, 1993 p. 101-142.
- xv. Emma LaRocque "Violence in Aboriginal Communities" in The Path To Healing Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, March 1994.
- xvi. Joan Wierzba, Betty Bastien and Elsie Bastien "Native Family Violence in Lethbridge" in Native Studies Review, 7 no. 1, 1991, p. 136.
- xvii. Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, Ibid1 p. 156.
- xviii. Canadian Institute of Child Health, The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile, 1994, p. 140.
- xix. Richard Falk states:" religious spokespeople may actually play a regressive role in social issues -- for instance on the status of women.": Falk, R., "Satisfying Human Needs in a World of Sovereign States: Rhetoric, Reality and Vision" in The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment, Charles K. Wilber (ed) New York, Random House, Inc. 1988.
- xx. David C. Korton defines "communal violence" as the "violence that occurs among

- people who share the same national boundaries and identity". Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda, Connecticut: Kumarin Press 1990, p. 14.
- xxi. Roger Gibbins and J. Rick Ponting, "Historical Overview and Background" in Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization, J. Rick Ponting (ed.) Toronto, McClland and Stewart Ltd. 1986, p. 44.
- xxii. CBC Radio Sunday Morning, Membership Laws on Reserves, June 11, 1995.
- xxiii. Gibbins and Ponting assess and analyze the future prospects for aboriginal people under self-government. They state "As self-government is implemented in the years ahead, many and perhaps most of the political concerns of Indians will be addressed within Indian political institutions": Gibbins, R. and J R. Ponting, Faces and Interfaces of Indian Self-Government Toronto: McClland and Stewart Ltd. 1986, p. 53.
- xxiv. Anastasia Shkilnyk quotes a forty-one year old woman who spoke of her inability to be heard in her own community or have her needs met: "*The Chief talks about 'my people' and 'our people.' Hell, on this reserve, there are those who work steady, and those who are on welfare and drunk most of the time. We're the ones on the bottom of the heap. Why doesn't someone give us a chance?'*": Shkilnyk, A., A Poison Stronger Than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibway Community, New Haven Connecticut, Yale University Press 1985, p. 152.
- xxv. Gore, A., Earth in Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992 p. 162.
- xxvi. Canadian Institute of Child Health, The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile, 2nd Edition, 1994 p. 138.
- xxvii. Gore states: "At times, we still marvel at the way another human being manifests the experience of life, but that sense of wonder seems more difficult to sustain now, perhaps because we have devalued the commitment to others, whether latchkey

children, ailing parents, abandoned spouses, neglected friends and neighbours, or indeed one of our fellow citizens: Gore, A., Ibid1 1992, pp. 161-162.

- xxviii. C. Dumont-Smith and P. Labelle National Family Violence Survey, Ottawa: Indian and Inuit Nurses of Canada 1992.
- xxix. Evelyn Zellerer, Violence Against Aboriginal Women, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1993 p. 10.
- xxx. Dumont-Smith, C. and P. Sioui-Labelle, Ibid1
- xxxi. Chambers, C et al. Damaged and Needing Help: Violence and Abuse in Aboriginal Families in Yellowknife and Lutsel K'e, Final Draft, September 15, 1993.
- xxxii. LaRocque, E., Violence in Native Communities a report to the Commission, 1993.
- xxxiii. ManyFingers, B., Treaty 7 Community Study: Violence and Community Stress 1994, p. 33.
- xxxiv. op cit p. 36.
- xxxv. op cit2 p. 51.
- xxxvi. C. La Prairie and B. Steinke, Seen But Not Heard: Native People in the Inner City, Report 2: City-by-City Differences - The Inner City and the Criminal Justice System Ottawa, ON: Department of Justice, Canada 1994.
- xxxvii. Chambers et al. Ibid1
- xxxviii. op cit1
- xxxix. Nuttall and Light quoted in ManyFingers, B., Ibid1
- xl. ManyFingers, B., Ibid2 p. 55.

- xli. Bopp, Julie et al, The Sacred Tree, Lethbridge: Four Worlds Development Press, 1984.
- xlii. At the 1992 Annual General Assembly of the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, Norma-Jean Dubray/Byrd of the Circle 4 Project Association explained the Medicine Wheel as follows: "*The mystery of all endings is found in the birth of new beginnings. There is no ending in the journey of the four directions. The human capacity is infinite. The Medicine Wheel turns forever.*"
- . Jean-Paul Brodeur, Carol La Prairie and Roger McDonnell state: "As we have seen, through co-operation and sharing, strangers could become familiar. However, none of this really occurred and there are people who live in the same communities today who have never had anything to do with each other. Individual wage labour and a weakening of the value of sharing had made, as we have seen, relationships within the household pretty uncertain in many ways. Beyond this, relations are weaker still..." Broder, J-P. et al, Justice For The Cree: Final Report Grand Council of the Crees (Quebec)/Cree Regional Authority, 1991, p. 36.
- Carol La Prairie also writes about an almost complete lack of willingness on the part of many Crees to perform tasks for one another without pay. She includes "elders speaking at schools, children bringing aged parents to clinics or looking after them at home, youth lacking interest in 'games' and wanting tournaments which involve money, selling moose or other game rather than giving it away.": in Broder, J-P. et al, Justice For The Cree: Communities, Crime And Order. The Grand Council of the Crees (Quebec)/Cree Regional Authority, 1991, p. 101.
- xliv. Theresa Bull, Councillor, Lois Bull Band and Vice-Chairman, Hobbema Health Board stated: "When we had no money, we had a lot of family unity. Then we had all this money and people could buy anything they wanted. It replaced the old values. If you weren't sure of the old values of the community, money brought in a value of its own. It doesn't bring happiness. It put more value on materialistic possessions. the family and the value of spirituality got lost.": Geoffrey York, The Dispossessed: Life And Death In Native Canada, London, Vintage U.K., 1990 p. 90.
- xlv. Hussein A. Bulhan describes violence as "...any relation, process or condition by

which an individual or group violates the physical, social and/or psychological [spiritual] integrity of another person or group: in in Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of the Oppression, Plenum Press, New York, 1985. p. 135.

- xlvi. Manfred Max Neef, Antonio Eligade, and Martin Hopenhayn, "Human Scale Development: An Option for the Future" Development Dialogue, vol. 1, 1989, p. 21.
- xlvii. Yngve G Lithman, The Community Apart: A Case Study of a Canadian Indian Reserve Community, Winnipeg, The University of Manitoba Press 1984, p. 124.
- xlviii. Shkilnyk, A., Ibid1 p. 106.
- xlix. Tony Martens, Brenda Daily and Maggie Hodgson, The Spirit Weeps, Nechi Institute, 1988 p. 117.
- i. Gore, A., Ibid2 p. 171.
- ii. Gore, A., Ibid3
- iii. Chambers, C. et al Ibid2 p. 54.
- liii. Brodeur, La Prairie and McDonnell describe the recent emergence of a moral order among the James Bay Cree which indulge the youth with supervisory positions over older people. This new order casts aside traditional moral systems where individuals are "encouraged to view themselves as a participant in an order that stressed differences of social positioning between people - such as grandmother and granddaughter, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife - and how these differences are drawn together in orderly arrangements by people actively fulfilling their proper duties and obligations to each other": Brodeur, J-P. et al, Ibid1 pp. 25-26.
- liv. As Brodeur, La Prairie and McDonnell state, traditionally, knowledge was passed down from one generation to the next without formal codification and precise explanations. Lessons learned could only be demonstrated by exploratory

approximation since, in the traditional learning environment, "little opportunity for the younger to challenge the knowledge of the older exists.": Brodeur, J-P. et al, Ibid2 p. 27.

- iv. Russel Lawrence Barsh writes: "*Those fit to lead are also deemed to be the foremost examples for children. Education is not entrusted to technicians, but lodged with the highest levels of public leadership, because forming young minds is at least as important and challenging as helping adults make collective decisions. Education and government are inseparable, moreover because well-educated children tend to be self-disciplined adults - and respected teachers can become influential leaders.*": Barsh, R.L., "The Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems" in The American Indian Quarterly: Journal of American Indian Studies, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 193.
- lvi. Brodeur, La Prairie and McDonnell note the correlation between the erosion of traditional authority and the discontent of young Crees. They write: "*...there is a generational and cultural gap between the younger Crees and the persons vested with traditional authority, who they are perceived by the rest of the community to lack respect for. As we noted, the phenomenon of disenfranchised youth is more ominous than the customary misunderstandings between the younger and the older generations. It implies a genuine reluctance toward the traditional way of life and a search for models outside those provided by the community.*": Brodeur et al, Ibid3 p. 57.
- lvii. It should be noted that as of the end of Fiscal Year 1995-1996, Aboriginal specific projects under the Family Violence Prevention Division are under review.
- lviii. Family Violence - Situation Paper. Ministry of Supply and Services, Canada. 1992. p. 1.
- lix. Chambers et al., Ibid3 pp. 14-15.
- lx. Gore states: "*We enshrine the self as the unit of ethical account, separate and distinct not just from the natural world but even from a sense of obligation to*

others - not just in future generations, but increasingly even to others in the same generation; and not just those in distant lands, but increasingly even in our own communities. We do this not because we don't care but because we don't really live in our lives.": Gore, A., Ibid4 p. 241.

- lxi. Barsh, R.L. Ibid1 p. 185.
- lxii. York Ibid1 p. 85.
- lxiii. Martens, Daily and Hodgson Ibid1 1988 p. 125.
- lxiv. Shkilnyk Ibid2 p. 85.
- lxv. Briggs quoted in Brodribb, Somer "The Traditional Roles of Native Women in Canada and the Impact of Colonization" in The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 9.
- lxvi. Boldt and Long state "*But in Indian tribal society individual self-interest was inextricably intertwined with tribal interests; that is the general good and the individual good were virtually identical. Laslett's 'onion skin' analogy aptly illustrates the mythical quality of individuality in traditional Indian society. To apprehend the individual in tribal Indian society, he says, we would have to peel off a succession of group-oriented and derived attitudes. The individual turns out to be metaphorical layers of group attitudes, at the bottom of which nothing remains.*": Bolt, M and J.A. Long, "Tribal Philosophies and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms" in The Quest for Justice: Aboriginal People and Aboriginal Rights, Meno Boldt and J. Anthony Long (eds.) Toronto: University of Toronto Press p. 336.
- lxvii. The James Bay Crees claim that unearthly beings transfer power to select individuals, thus enabling these beneficiaries to draw strength from a secret and sometimes insidious power base. Jean-Paul Brodeur, Carol La Prairie and Roger McDonnell elaborate on the previous observation by commenting: "This means

also that some person within the group possesses extraordinary abilities relative to the others and these abilities have an alien origin." (original emphasis). Even though these powers can operate over and above the existing moral order, the potential for abuse of one's power or "medicine" is contained by the security people have in one another's submission to the moral order.: Brodeur, J-P Ibid1 p.17.

- lxviii. Zellerer, Ibid1 p. 27.
- lxix. Vis-a-vis 1993 p. 11.
- lxx. York Ibid2 pp. 263-265.
- lxxi. Harold Cardinal's words reflect how aboriginal feel about elders: *"To find the models we need, the first place to look is within ourselves. We have to go back to our elders..."*
- lxxii. Peggy Bird, Chippewas of Sarnia Healing Circle, Presentation to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Sarnia, ONT (93-05-10)
- lxxiii. Gibbins and Ponting Ibid1 p. 46.
- lxxiv. Suichi Nagata "From Ethnic Bourgeoisie to Organic Intellectuals: Speculations on North American Native Leadership" in Anthropologica, Vol. 29, 1987 p. 68.

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