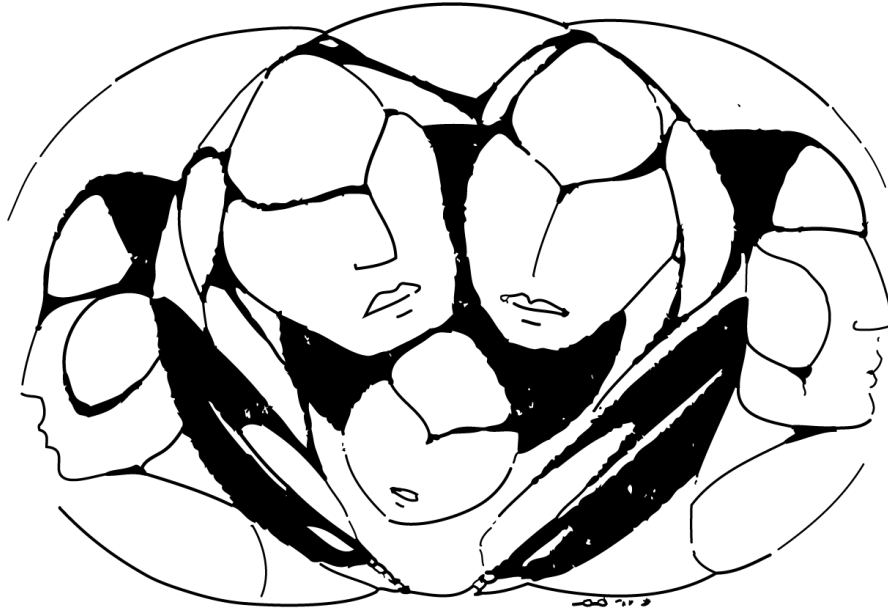


BREAKING FREE



A Proposal for Change To Aboriginal Family Violence



Ontario Native Women's Association
Thunder Bay, Ontario
December, 1989

Woman is the centre of the wheel of life. She is the heartbeat of the people. She is not just in the home, but she is the community, she is the Nation.

One of our Grandmothers.

The woman is the foundation on which Nations are built. She is the heart of her Nation. If that heart is weak the people are weak. If her heart is strong and her mind is clear then the Nation is strong and knows its purpose. The woman is the centre of everything.

From "The Woman's Part", Art Solomon, Ojibwa Elder.

PREFACE

It is not possible to find a First Nations or Metis woman in Ontario whose life has not been affected in some way by family violence. Either as a child witnessing spousal assault, as a child victim herself, as an adult victim of a husband or boyfriend's violence, or as a grandmother who witnesses the physical and emotional scars of her daughter or granddaughter's beatings: we are all victims of violent family situations and we want it to stop now. For too long this has been an everyday reality, whether we live in isolated Aboriginal communities, on an Indian reserve, in a rural area or a large urban centre in an Ontario setting. We are tired of the beating and high statistics; we want an end to family violence; we want respect.

Aboriginal family violence is not simply a husband-wife or boyfriend-girlfriend problem. The reasons behind the high incidence of family violence are intimately connected with the poor social, political and economic position we find ourselves in. The inability to determine who we are, racial prejudice and the history of governmental control in our lives through the oppressive instrument of federal regulation (The Indian Act), has left the men and women of the First Nations in Canada frustrated and with no where else to turn. The level of anger and frustration has been rising and with it the incidence of alcoholism and family violence. All these factors contribute to a loss of self-esteem, which in turn leads to a lack of respect for women and children. The continual rejection by Federal and Provincial Governments of our inherent right to self-government has definite ramifications on our peoples.

This report unravels the complexities of Aboriginal family violence exclusively from an Aboriginal woman's perspective. In this regard, it is the first of its kind in Ontario. The perspective which we bring is one building upon intimate insights into the nature and causes of family violence, the extent and availability of support for the victims, and, most significantly, the recommended program of action that we believe can work.

We appeal to you for your support and encouragement in helping us to accomplish the recommended changes contained in this report. We want to break the cycle of family violence in which First Nations and Metis women are trapped, and to strengthen the hearts of our Nations.

For more information about this Report, or about the Ontario Native Women's Association, please contact:

Ontario Native Women's Association
212 Miles Street East
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7C 1J6
1-800-667-0816 or 1-807-623-3442

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed an enormous amount of energy and thought into the Aboriginal Family Violence Project, and this Report. The Project staff's efforts must be acknowledged – they undertook extensive community networking and needs assessment, which was a great emotional strain given the nature of the work involved. Moreover, the political leaders of the Ontario Native Women's Association, and particularly those women who have contributed their ideas to the Native Child and Family Support Services Committee of the Board of Directors, must be commended for a long and hard commitment to these important issues.

We were assisted by numerous helpful representatives from Aboriginal organizations across the province of Ontario, including bands, tribal councils and local affiliate organizations of the Ontario agencies, workers from shelters for abused women, have also contributed information which assisted us in the preparation of this Report. Specifically, we would like to express our gratitude for the financial support provided by the Native Community Branch of the Ministry of Citizenship, and the support of the Ontario Women's Directorate.

Needless to say, the opinions expressed in the Report are those of the Ontario Native Women's Association, but the assistance from the above organizations was formative in developing our views and our plan of action. We would also like to express our appreciation to Mary Ellen Turpel, Phillip Edwards and Paul Capon who wrote this Report.

Lastly, but most importantly, we cannot forget to thank the people who so graciously, honestly and bravely filled out our surveys. Without the input of these people, this Project would not be what it is.

The Report is thus dedicated to those Aboriginal people who have had to suffer family violence and are waiting for the day when it will stop.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Part I An Analysis of the Cycle of Aboriginal Family Violence.....	5
(i) Methodology of the Project.....	5
(ii) Research Findings.....	6
Part II Review of Services Available to the Battered Aboriginal Women.....	10
(i) Emergency and Shelter Services.....	14
(ii) Medical Services.....	16
(iii) Rehabilitation for Batterers.....	16
(iv) Services for the Child.....	17
Part III The Canadian Justice System Aboriginal People.....	18
(i) Legal Services for the Abused Aboriginal Women.....	20
(ii) Access to Matrimonial Property in Situations of Family Violence...	20
Part IV Survey of Community Care and Social Workers.....	23
(i) A Holistic Approach.....	23
(ii) Education and Training.....	24
(iii) Incidence of Family Violence.....	25
(iv) Residency.....	26
(v) Alcohol.....	26
(vi) The Situation of the Abusers.....	27
(vii) The Agencies.....	27
(viii) Solutions.....	29
(ix) Family Violence Education in the Schools.....	29
(x) Communication Tools.....	30
(xi) Conclusions of the Social Service Providers.....	31
Part V Summary on the Extent of the Problem in Ontario.....	32
Part VI The Proposal for Action.....	33
Part VII Conclusion.....	40
Endnotes.....	41
Appendix Index.....	45
Bibliography.....	71
Audio Visual Aids.....	77

INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Native Women's Association has been concerned about Aboriginal Family Violence since our inception in May 1971. Over the past sixteen years, numerous discussions have arisen about the problem of family violence among Aboriginal People at our Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Annual General Assembly meetings. During the past few years, a special committee of the Board of Directors has met regularly to consider what the organization can do to work towards ending Aboriginal Family Violence. This five-person committee, called the Native Child and Family Support Services Committee, has overseen the Associations' work in the family violence area and has directed our recent Aboriginal Family Violence Project.

The Ontario Native Women's Association's Aboriginal Family Violence Project began on November 30, 1987 and ended on July 1, 1988. The project had several research objectives in the family violence area, with the overall aim of assessing, from Aboriginal women's perspective, the situation of abused women in Ontario, including the incidence of family violence, the availability and adequacy of services, and exploring Aboriginal solutions to these problems. This Report and Proposal for Action is not only the by-product of our six-month project, but also our long-standing commitment to contribute to a strengthening of Aboriginal women and families in Ontario.

The Aboriginal Family Violence Project has accomplished many things during its short tenure. It has raised awareness among women and service organizations of the needs of Aboriginal women and children. It has worked to develop the network of organizations and persons working in the family violence area. We have collected a great deal of information from around the province and from outside Ontario and Canada regarding creative solutions for Aboriginal people, enough to establish the base for a clearinghouse of information specifically on Aboriginal women and family violence.

This Report cannot possibly reflect all the work of our Project. Instead, we have chosen to prepare a Report which is geared towards addressing the needs of Aboriginal women in violent situations by reviewing the predicament of Aboriginal women in Ontario. We have outlined the needs of women in terms of services and support and detailed a "Proposal for Action" which governments, Aboriginal organizations, Women's groups and other interested parties can consider in working collectively towards designing solutions which will break the cycle of Aboriginal family violence.

Many of the issues addressed in this Report involve new perspectives – Aboriginal perspectives – on dealing with family violence. For example, non-Aboriginal readers will be interested in the sections on the criminal justice system and the feasibility of laying assault charges in cases of Aboriginal violence. The most shocking new data that our Project collected in the area of family violence were with respect to the severity of violence. Our study has found that 84% of respondents felt family violence occurs in their community with nearly 24% surveyed individuals indicated they personally know cases of family violence which had led to death – most frequently, to the women.

The substance of the Report has been structured to allow those already familiar with the situation faced by Aboriginal women in violent families to go directly to the proposals for change. The report is divided into seven more or less distinct parts: (i) is an analysis of the incidence and level of family violence in Aboriginal homes in Ontario; (ii) services available specifically for Aboriginal women in violent homes; (iii) the Canadian Criminal Justice system and its relationship to Aboriginal Canadians; (iv) survey of Community Care and Service Professionals; (v) conclusions on the overall predicament of Aboriginal women who are abused and who seek outside help from service agencies and organizations; (vi) a proposal for action on Aboriginal family violence which is culturally appropriate to our situation, and (vii) conclusion. We welcome your comments and response to the proposal for action section of the Report, which we hope will stimulate action and become a blueprint for change.

Before beginning with an analysis of the incidence of Aboriginal family violence, we would like to provide some necessary background information to the Report. First, for those unfamiliar with the Ontario Native Women's Association, a brief discussion of the organization and its

mandate. Secondly, some general comments on the reasons behind the high incidence of family violence in Aboriginal communities and the connection between violence and the wider struggles for self-determination and self-government.

As mentioned above, the Ontario Native Women's Association was found in May 1971. We are a non-profit Aboriginal women's organization, incorporated in the province of Ontario. Our mandate is to represent and develop the leadership potential of Metis and First Nation women. In the past, we have taken prominent positions on constitutional reform and sexual equality, amendments to the Indian Act, economic development, and on the spiritual and cultural issues of importance to the future of our Nations. At our twelfth annual meeting in 1986, we adopted a new structure that divides our membership into four regions with the province (East, South, West, North) which also represents the four spiritual directions.

At our annual meetings, we elect representatives from each region to direct our organization.

At the thirteenth annual assembly (1988) of the Ontario Native Women's Association, the organization established the Metis Women's Commission. This body, within the Ontario Native Women's Association, is meant to examine specifically the economic and social living conditions, as well as the rights of Metis women and their families. Much of the rationale behind this stems from the fact that the needs and rights of Metis, who live in rural, urban, and in small communities without the protection of federal status, go unrecognized and are not respected by both the federal and provincial levels of government. This again is a result of governmental interference in the lives of Aboriginal people with the aim of dividing them along blood and cultural lines. It has always been Aboriginal tradition that membership was determined by a consensus based upon community support and individual choice. Although the family violence survey does not ask the status of the respondents it can be safely deduced that the urban, rural, and isolated communities include Metis women.

In addition, an important part of our structure is our youth representation, and our Elders who advise us and attend our meetings. The real basis of our organization is an extensive network of 'locals' which are affiliated with the Ontario Native Women's Association and from which our leaders are chosen. Presently, we have 53 locals throughout the province. It was this network of local First Nations and Metis women which we targeted in assessing the needs of Aboriginal families, and it is their interests which are reflected in the proposals for change.

In 1980, the Ontario Native Women's Association commissioned the Exploratory Research Report, to investigate the state of Ontario's Native women which concluded that over half of the families interviewed were single parents. They had an average single family of four, earning less than \$ 10,000 per annum and receiving some sort of social services. These figures have been substantiated through various local, provincial, and national studies regarding the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal families. In addition, over fifty percent lived off reserve in urban and rural communities. These circumstances led the Ontario Native Women's Association to believe that the extremely high figures exist due to the high incidence of alcohol related family violence. This has led to family separation, and in almost all cases the mother and family members have fled to larger urban and other communities for protection and better services.

We should stress that the views put forward in this Report are those of First Nation and Metis women, or perspective on the problem of family violence, the reasons behind it, and the proposal for change. We do not address non-Aboriginal studies, or overly compare our situation to that of non-Aboriginal women because we believe our situation and needs are culturally unique and require a distinct response. In the past, Aboriginal women's needs in the family violence area have been poorly served by non-Aboriginal studies. Either our interests have been lumped in with "ethnic minorities," misunderstood, or ignored. For example, in a recent study by the Canadian Advisory Council on Status of Women, Battered But Not Beaten...Preventing Wife Battering in Canada, the interests of Aboriginal women were dealt with only tangentially, and arguably in a misleading way, particularly, the issue of access to Aboriginal policing services and child service agencies. While these studies are well-intentioned, the difficulty is that only an Aboriginal woman can knowledgeably speak on our needs, our cultural perspective, and our hopes for change. We do not dwell upon these studies in the Report because we want to present our perspective, that of Aboriginal women.

It is important at the outset for us to state generally what we view as the reasons for Aboriginal family violence, a problem of considerable magnitude. This social problem cannot be separated from the larger problem with Aboriginal society, because it has arisen from and in a response to these larger problems. The broader perspective of Canadian-Aboriginal relations has provided the environment from which profound social and economic problems, such as family violence, have taken root. The fact that an oppressive bureaucratic system of government has been imposed on our people, at the cost of many of our traditional governing practices and spiritual beliefs, has created great social confusion within Aboriginal culture..

For much of the past century we have been living under bureaucratic control, with no real self-government. The Indian Act governs much of our everyday affairs, including family life. As a result, the social problems within our families are frequently severe. Violence, alcohol, drug, and solvent abuse, are uniform tragedies of Aboriginal society. The severe impact of these social ills is immediately felt in the family. The treatment of members within the family is a reflection of the treatment of Aboriginal society and culture on a broader basis. This is especially true for us because extended family has been, and often remains, the basic organizational unit of our Societies.

Many problems have arisen because of the removal of control over our lives. Regulation by a faceless bureaucracy has resulted in the aggravation and escalation of violence in our communities. Compulsory residential schooling of Aboriginal children, away from their parents, directly led to the decline of parenting skills because the children were denied parental role models. Aboriginal women, ostracized from their families and communities due to marriage to men without Indian Status, the importance of the extended family in Aboriginal upbringing. The removal of Aboriginal children from their parents, extended families and communities through adoption to non-Aboriginal families and communities, created not only pain but confusion as the children were not allowed to learn the central role of family into their culture. In effect, family violence is a reaction against system of domination, disrespect, and bureaucratic control.

Although we understand the root causes of Aboriginal family violence and sympathize with victims and abusers, we in no way condone this action. The respondents to our survey stressed that family abuse is wrong and they want it stopped now. Our Elders tell us that personal responsibility, self-control and respect for all people is a tenet of Aboriginal culture. It is the belief of the Ontario Native Women's Association that all Aboriginal men, women and children have a right to live in a violence-free environment. Our concern is to stimulate awareness, education and prevention of family violence among our own people.

To combat the plague of family violence an all encompassing approach must be taken. Solutions are required in the short term but also in the long term and without these long term commitments, any immediate remedy will only be a band-aid. Right now, more crisis homes, counseling and second stage housing are required for battered women and children. However, there must be more services directed at the batterer such as residential treatment programs which both reform the batterer yet allow the victims to remain in the matrimonial home. Community awareness and education on this subject to Aboriginal people of all ages is a necessity. At the same time, Provincial and Federal Governments must commit themselves to recognizing our inherent right to self-determination in the development and implementation of new forms of governing which are based on our values and aspiration. A concrete example of this is the creation of an Aboriginal justice system based on our own concepts of justice and more social service agencies controlled by Aboriginal people. As stated above, if the long term goal or self-government, which would create a greater sense of self-worth, is not pursued, then efforts to eradicate family violence from Aboriginal society will fail.

It is only recently, through the publication of national statistics, that the rate of family violence in Canada has become known. Aboriginal women, however have known for some time the high rate of family violence in their communities. National publicity over the issue has also given new confidence to Aboriginal women who now are demonstrating their own local efforts to lessen the degree of family violence in their cities, towns, villages, reserves and rural areas. These efforts, such as the healing lodge must be properly financially supported. The Provincial Government plays a large role in organizing and funding the establishment of off-reserve, culturally-orientated family support projects such as the Native Community Crisis Team in

Toronto, Mahmawencike Inc. in Thunder Bay and Ojibway Tribal Family Services in Kenora. These three Aboriginal organizations are clearly demonstrating their responsibility to “assist their own” with family intervention programs, Sacred Circle gatherings, family respite care and child prevention programs. But, there are only a few agencies like these and there needs to be plenty more.

PART I – AN ANALYSIS OF THE CYCLE OF ABORIGINAL VIOLENCE

Over the course of our Aboriginal family violence project, we have tried to ascertain the extent and the effect of Aboriginal family violence on women and our communities as a whole. Before describing our findings and impressions from the Project, we should review the various methods we employed in our efforts to fulfill our objectives.

(i) Methodology of the Project

In brief, the method we utilized was as follows:

- Questionnaire development and distribution
- Consultation by telephone and personal interviews
- Attendance at relevant conferences and meetings
- Literature search, review of reports and bibliographies
- Review of services
- Interview community care and health professionals

Underlying all of the Project activity has been a steady stream of oral tradition which is just as highly regarded in our culture as written documentation. While obviously not empirically sound, this is highly suggestive as to the extent and seriousness of violence within Aboriginal families. We realized that it is extremely difficult to find an Aboriginal woman who has not had at least indirect experience of spousal assault that personally knows of a situation of family violence. To some degrees this reflects the fact that our communities are still places where people know each other.

However, a questionnaire that we developed and circulated to women in communities via the network of our local affiliates confirmed the pervasiveness suggested by informal evidence of personal experience of most Aboriginal women. This questionnaire was designed to assess how Aboriginal women viewed the prevalence of family violence, what services were available to them in different parts of the province, and whether they felt these services to be adequate for their needs. The survey looked for the broadest sample of Aboriginal women; it sought out women living on reserves, in urban centers, rural settings or isolated communities making no reference to governmental imposed status. The final format and content of the questionnaire was developed by the Ontario Native Women's Association, and adopted by the Board of Directors after it was reviewed by an external expert.

The Aboriginal family violence questionnaire included an outline of the Ontario Native Women's Association Family Violence Project, an assurance of confidentiality, general instructions, and basic working definitions (e.g. " Abuser " is the person who acts violently or threatens violence towards another person). Six preliminary questions dealt with demographic information and community infrastructure (e.g. whether telephone services were available to women in the community). The remainder of the questions on the questionnaire addressed family violence directly. Fifty questions were structured to obtain the maximum response by not over-burdening or intimidating respondents. Twelve of the inquires sought written (single word or phrase) responses, 15 yes/no/don't know responses and 23 multiple choice and/or multiple answer questions appear.

Six hundred and eighty questionnaires were distributed through the Ontario Native Women's Association local organizations. The total number of completed questionnaires (in full or partially completed) received and collected was 104, or approximately 15%. Although the ratio would be an inadequate base from which to draw generally accepted statistical conclusions, based upon the received wisdom from data gathering, it does provide adequate information from which, in combination with other studies and trends, confirms what kind of conditions are apparent for Aboriginal women. The degree of response consistency (i.e. uniform patterns such as more than 90% affirmative responses to some inquires) on questions of fact enhances the validity of evidence derived from the questionnaires. In all, it is likely that the data are especially valuable as indicators confirming or confounding anecdotal evidence rather than empirical proofs. The information gathered also contributed descriptively to the situation of family violence, that is, its nature as perceived by women in the midst of it and to qualify its occurrence.

The factors which most likely inhibited a higher response rate to the questionnaire may include the following:

- Sensitivity of the subject matter
- Fear of talking about the situation in that it might lead to more violence
- Shame, not wanting to face that they have been abused
- High-incidence of English-language illiteracy among our women
- Length and density necessary for questionnaire integrity
- Informal distribution network (contributing to lower response rate as a trade-off ensuring participation of women not usually targeted for research) proliferation of administrative forms which Aboriginal people are requested to complete

In addition to our questionnaire research activity; we conducted consultations by telephone and personal interview, structured according to a determined format in order to elicit information specifically on the incidence of family violence and the needs of Aboriginal women. In total, approximately 167 contacts were made as part of the Project efforts. Of these, 127 were made by telephone, 40 were made in person. The following list represents the types of agencies, organizations, and individual contacts contracted in our research:

- Victims of abuse
- Family service workers
- Academic specialists
- Special police constables
- Mental health workers
- Crisis team members
- Volunteer coordinators
- Transition home staff
- Residence counselors
- Native court-workers
- Family court-workers
- Prison workers
- Prisoners
- Community health representatives
- Children's aid workers
- Municipal social workers
- Skills development officers
- Alcohol, drug and solvent abuse counselors
- Family therapists
- Government policy analysts
- Aboriginal political representatives including chiefs and band counselors community development workers
- Elders

(ii) Research Findings

Our research activities, which is more direct, community based and province wide, have suggested to us findings which are shocking and more severe than other studies. It is noteworthy that one unique aspect of our research was the attention were focused on women in the North and in isolated communities. As contrasted with an " expert opinion " survey, the Ontario Native Women's Association research was a front-line survey, which tapped the knowledge of experts through personal interviews. The general finds outlined below have been averaged across the province, with an indication where there were geographical differences in the respondent's reply to the questionnaire.

Of the respondents to our questionnaire, 45% lived on reserves, 30% lived in urban centers, 17% lived in a rural setting and 8% said they were living in an isolated community. 62% of the respondents indicated that they resided in a community of less that 2,000 people. Only 13% noted that they lived in a city of over 100,00 persons. 55% said they resided in communities

with a population of over 90% Aboriginal with another 11% saying they lived in communities where the Aboriginal people constituted 50% of the population.

In terms of services, 85% indicated that they did have access to a telephone, while 15% indicated not. This level of service is no doubt lower than for non-Aboriginal Ontarians, but not surprising in light of the isolation of many Aboriginal communities. As for transportation out of their communities 31% of the respondents said they did not have adequate transportation out of their communities for help if necessary.

The responses to questions regarding the incidence of family violence was startling but consistent. These results seem to indicate that the level of family violence in Aboriginal communities is more severe than has previously been suggested by researchers. For example, 84% of respondents indicated that family violence occurs in their communities, while 15% suggested that they did not know. Only 1% (one respondent) indicated that family violence does not occur. Other studies into the prevalence of family violence in Aboriginal communities (such as Riddell and Doxtator 1986) had found that 70% of Aboriginal respondents to their study believed that violence was a “ common experience “ for Aboriginal people in an urban environment.

Moreover, when questioned whether they had personally experienced family violence, 80% of the respondents indicated that they had personally experience family violence. This figure is even higher than those obtained in previous studies. It seems fair to conclude, in light of the preponderance of empirical evidence and research data, that the incidence of Aboriginal family violence is 80%, an astonishingly high figure in comparison with the level of non-Aboriginal family violence. The incidence of family violence in Canadian society has been placed at 10%; that is, one in every ten Canadian women have experienced family violence at some point in their lives. This may be conservative in light of the margin of error for empirical analysis, however, the incidence of family violence in Aboriginal communities is eight times higher than the average for Canadian society as a whole.

Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the respondents indicated that they felt that mental and emotional abuse was a feature of family violence; 87% indicated that physical abuse was a feature; and 57% suggested that sexual abuse was a feature of family violence in Aboriginal communities. The respondents indicated that women were most frequently abused in a family context (88%), followed by children (51%), husbands (12%), and Elders/friends (10%). The batterer was identified as the husband with an incidence of 84%, the wife at 15%, with others such as grown children and Elders also responsible for family violence at a very much smaller number.

When it came to the peoples perceptions of family violence, 33% said few were affected by it, 24% said $\frac{1}{4}$ of the people were affected by it, 14% said it touched $\frac{1}{2}$ of the people, 18% indicated family violence affected $\frac{3}{4}$ of the people, and 5% said it affected almost all of the community; another 5% said they did not know. The high level of those who thought few were affected by family violence may be the result of the secrecy involved in family abuse.

Seventy-eight (78%) of the respondents indicated that more than one member of the family was a victim of regular abuse, and 60% suggested that there was more than one family member involved in the abuse of women and children. 42% of the respondents indicated that when family violence occurs, it is not talked about; 48% said it was talked about, and 19% said they did not know. In reference to reporting the violence, it was demonstrated that 45% said family violence was reported, 28% said it was not reported and 24% said they did not know. The low level of reporting family violence may be attributed to such factors as shame, fear, not aware of services available, threats, loss of privacy, and family break-up. 52% of the respondents expressed the sentiment that most families stay together even though the violence continues. 8% said all families stay together. 13% said half of the families remain united, 10% said less than half stay together and 17% said a few remain together in the event of family violence..

Most victims of Aboriginal family violence only separated from their husband/partner/family following an incidence of aggravated violence, where the life of the victim is nearly taken. Of families experiencing violence, the respondents indicated that most wanted help, most needed help, yet few ever received any from outside the family. The types of injuries sustained as a result of family violence in Aboriginal communities were characterized as quite severe. Eight-one percent (81%) reported that the victim suffered bruises; 71% mentions cuts

and bleeding, 47% broken bones, another 47% had wounds, 80% said mental and emotional breakdowns were the result and 7% mentioned unwanted pregnancy, disfigurement, and disablement as injuries sustained by violence.

While these are all serious medical and psychological wounds, 54 respondents spoke of needing medical attention. In another question, 54 respondents also said they knew of people who needed medical attention more than once. The severe level of violence in Aboriginal communities is thus compounded by the search for help in very few cases. The respondents of the questionnaire indicated that 54% thought very few people who experienced family violence sought help, 8% thought about ¼ searched out aid, 11% said almost all looked for help and 6% did not know. This is a very troubling figure and reveals that there are real gaps in making services available to Aboriginal victims of family violence, and in educating communities about the nature of abuse and the availability of services. The nature and adequacy of the services available to the abused Aboriginal women and family, will be discussed in the next section.

The respondents to the questionnaire suggested that when a family is experiencing violence the family does split up. Our study found that in 82% of the cases it is the woman who leaves the home, followed by 41% for the children, and in 20% of the case, it is the husband who leaves the home.

The data gathered from the questionnaire reveals the involvement of alcohol abuse in family violence situations; 44% said alcohol was often involved and 37% said it was usually found in a violent situation. The remaining 19% can be divided into another three categories; 7% said it was rarely used in association with violence, 6% said it was sometimes used and another 6% said they could not say if alcohol contributed to family violence. The finding is corroborated by an earlier study of Aboriginal women in Nova Scotia which suggested that in 90% of the cases of family violence, women indicated that alcohol abuse was the immediate cause of the problem. Of the respondents to our survey, alcoholism was identified as a main cause of family violence by 78% of the respondents. (15% did not know and only 6% said no). When questioned on what other factors they considered contributed to Aboriginal family violence, the respondents to our questionnaire suggested that jealousy (67%), unemployment (65%), poor communication (57%), depression (52%), people not knowing how to get along (25%), exposure to violence when children (22%), problems with other family members (20%), and (8%) mentioned such other causes as low self-identity, drugs and nerves.

While the information gathered from our questionnaire suggests that the prevalence of Aboriginal family violence is perhaps more extreme than before considered, it does seem to confirm what has been apparent for some time. Aboriginal families experience a much higher level of family violence and abuse than their non-Aboriginal counterparts, both in Ontario and across the country. The awareness and availability of services is more limited, and the severity of injuries sustained is dangerously high.

We have reinforced earlier studies, and provided a further basis for the development of conclusions about the severity and prevalence of family violence in Aboriginal communities. In all, it is unassailably the case that Aboriginal women and family are trapped in a cycle of family violence, alcoholism, poverty and other social problems. There is no doubt that factors such as depression and the unavailability of jobs and money in Aboriginal communities are much more significant factors than for non-Aboriginal families. When we turn to the perceptions of Aboriginal women on the availability of services, and actually detail what has been developed specifically for Aboriginal women in Ontario, it is clear that much more support and energy must go into developing solutions for Aboriginal Family Violence.

As indicated at the outset, what we believe is at the core of many of these problems is the absence of self-government. The lack of self-government for much of modern history in Aboriginal society has created a climate where abuses such as family violence and alcoholism have been allowed to flourish. The inability of people to determine their destiny based upon their own cultural beliefs has stifled Aboriginal culture, creating a sense of confusion and loss of many of the traditional values which were predicated on respect and dignity of the individual. As Aboriginal people in general have been confined, with no place for the release of societal pressure, they have turned on themselves. The fact Aboriginal people face prejudice and ignorance by the majority non-Aboriginal population only exacerbates their situation. This invariably creates alienation and the desire to have some sense of control in their lives. Coupled

with a loss of identity due to societal transformation and the lack of skills to deal with those changes, the problems within Aboriginal collective society have been transferred to the individual within that society. The only place people have left to turn for both releasing the pressures they face and achieving some power in their lives is the family. Thus, the abusive relationship is a power relationship, one where the abuser seeks to control the partner due to the lack of control he/she faces everywhere else in their life. Fear, lack of education and a knowledge of their rights on the part of the abused allows the cycle to continue.

PART II – REVIEW OF SERVICES AVAILABLE TO THE BATTERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN

In this part of the Report, we review the extremely inadequate level of service available to Aboriginal women in violent situations. Although we have focused primarily on Aboriginal women, we have included brief sections reviewing services for Aboriginal batterers, and for Aboriginal children who have suffered emotionally from spousal assault. The survey also analyses the satisfaction level of respondents to the services available to them and what they would like to see in the future.

The indirect ramifications of family violence do, of course, extend to other family members apart from the wife or girlfriend. In our questionnaire, 78% of the people indicated that Aboriginal family violence affected other members of the family with children being the most affected, followed by the parents, siblings, grandparents, the community as a whole and even pets. (21% said they did not know and only 1% said family violence did not affect other family members). This reflects the important notion of the extended family for Aboriginal communities and the fact that everyone is touched in some way by family violence. The most common answer of how it affects other family members, besides the obvious physical and emotional pain, was the fact that children who see family violence while growing up are bound to repeat it themselves. It is noteworthy that when asked about what type of help that was available for these other members of the family who suffer the effects of family violence, 44% could not think of a response or name any services.

The areas considered below are service areas which we believe are very important in dealing with family violence, especially in Aboriginal communities, so we have briefly reviewed what is presently available in these areas. It should be emphasized that the review has been restricted to those services available exclusively to Aboriginal people that are culturally unique and geographically diverse and must be considered on their own, and not alongside the needs of non-Aboriginal residents of Ontario.

The perceptions of Aboriginal women, expressed in our questionnaire, are also included in the following sections on the adequacy and abundance of services for family violence victims. These general indicators are truly significant as they testify to the fact that the needs of Aboriginal women and their families experiencing family violence are currently not being met. This report corroborates the findings of previous studies for Aboriginal women in all of Ontario.

From our questionnaire, we received the following indications of the availability of services for the Aboriginal family experiencing violence. The charts below list the types of services which might be available for some Aboriginal people depending on their residence. A total figures chart (i) is presented first, which lists the known services available, and continuing, to those living on reserves (ii), in urban centers (iii), in rural setting (iv), and in isolated communities (v). The first column indicates the percentage of the total respondents who did not answer the question. The second column, denotes those who specifically said what services are not available to them. The third column gives the percentage of those who said the services were available. The fourth, fifth, and the sixth column indicate the satisfaction level to those who said the service was available.

(i) Total

Services/Resources	(a) No Answer	(b) Not Avail.	(c) Avail.	(d) Not Much	(e) Some What	(f) Most Help
Prevention Worker	42%	13%	45%	19%	32%	36%
Crisis Counselor	19%	32%	49%	16%	27%	33%
N.N.A.D.A.P.	51%	13%	36%	21%	34%	34%
CHR/Referral	51%	11%	38%	25%	46%	23%
Priest/Minister	45%	5%	50%	27%	46%	15%
Mental Health Worker	53%	11%	36%	13%	13%	45%
Chief	51%	7%	42%	50%	29%	16%
Band Counselor	53%	7%	40%	50%	29%	14%
Children's Aid Worker	34%	9%	57%	12%	34%	37%
Education Counselor	48%	11%	41%	53%	21%	9%
Others Mentioned:						
Police	94%		6%	67%		33%
Community Worker	96%		4%	45%		75%
A.A.	99%		1%	50%		50%
Employment Workers	99%		1%	100%		
Prison Liaison	99%		1%	100%		

Average of all the respondents who answered the questions: 49%

(ii) Reserve

Family/ Prevention Worker	30%	11%	59%	21%	32%	36%
Crisis Counselor	45%	21%	34%	19%	38%	25%
N.N.A.D.A.P.	34%	9%	57%	26%	32%	30%
CHR/Referral Clerk	35%	10%	90%	18%	61%	21%
Priest/Minister	41%	6%	53%	24%	48%	16%
Mental Health Worker	47%	13%	40%		53%	26%
Chief	32%	2%	66%	42%	35%	16%
Band Counselor	34%	2%	64%	50%	30%	17%
Children's Aid Worker	36%	9%	55%	19%	35%	31%
Education Counselor	38%	11%	51%	63%	13%	8%
Others Mentioned:						
Police	94%		6%	33%		66%
A.A.	96%		4%	50%		50%

Average of all the respondents who answered the questions: 63%

(iii) Urban

Services/Resources	(a) No Answer	(b) Not Avail.	(c) Avail.	(d) Not Much	(e) Some What	(f) Most Help
Family/Prevention Workers	58%	13%	29%	11%	30%	22%
Crisis Counselor	29%	3%	68%	14%	29%	29%
N.N.A.D.A.P.	68%	10%	22%	14%	29%	29%
CHR/Referral Clerk	48%	13%	39%	22%	11%	33%
Priest/Minister	45%		55%	24%	47%	24%
Mental Health Worker	49%	6%	45%	29%	36%	29%
Chief	65%	6%	29%	44%	22%	11%
Band Counselor	59%	3%	35%	45%	27%	9%
Children's Aid Worker	39%	6%	55%	6%	41%	35%
Education Counselor	55%	3%	42%	38%	31%	15%
Others Mentioned:						
Community Development	94%		6%			100%
Prison Liaison	97%		3%	100%		

Average of all the respondents who answered the questions: 47%

(iv) Rural

Family/Prevention Workers	61%	6%	33%	17%	50%	
Crisis Counselor	33%	6%	61%	18%	18%	45%
N.N.A.D.A.P.	67%	11%	22%		25%	75%
CHR/Referral Clerk	83%	11%	6%	100%		
Priest/Minister	56%		44%	25%	50%	
Mental Health Worker	72%	6%	22%	25%	25%	25%
Chief	73%	11%	16%	33%	67%	
Band Counselor	83%	11%	6%	100%		
Children's Aid Worker	27%	6%	67%	8%	33%	33%
Education Counselor	72%	6%	22%	75%		
Others Mentioned:						
Police	89%		11%	100%		
Employment Worker	94%		6%	100%		

Average of all the respondents who answered the questions: 38%

(v) Isolated Communities

Family/Prevention Workers	22%	38%	50%	25%	25%	50%
Crisis Counselor	25%	38%	37%			67%
N.N.A.D.A.P.	50%	50%				
CHR/Referral Clerk	50%	37%	13%	100%		
Priest/Minister	50%	25%	25%	100%		
Mental Health Worker	50%	37%	13%		100%	
Chief	50%	37%	13%			100%
Band Counselor	72%	38%				
Children's Aid Worker	22%	38%	50%			100%
Education Counselor	25%	50%	25%	50%		50%
Others Mentioned:						
Outreach Workers	75%		25%	50%		50%
Police	87%		13%	100%		

Average of all the respondents who answered the questions: 61%

These statistics provide some telling information as to the perceived availability of services. However, a note of caution must be attached as to the large percentage of people who did not fill in all the responses to this part of the questionnaire. For some, there simply may have been no services available and a blank response is meant to indicate that. This assumption can be supported by the low numbers in the not available columns. For others, they may not have been aware of the services offered to them and did not fill anything in due to lack of knowledge. If ignorance is the case, then some method of advertising must be developed to make people cognizant of services they may require. Other reasons for the low response rate may be due to the feeling that the service providers mentioned are not involved in their lives and have no bearing on family violence or simply that the respondent did not understand the question.

The reason why four separate lists were compiled based on residency was due to the fact that a general compilation of figures does not express the diversity in the lives of Aboriginal women. If one looks at each residence category and uses a crude basis of a 50% availability rate, vast differences in services availability can be observed. Most noticeably, those living on reserves seem to have a better knowledge of the services in their community than Aboriginal women living in the other three areas. For those residing on reserves, only Crisis Counselors and Mental Health Workers fell below 50% while rural and isolated communities each had eight services below 50%. Rural individuals said 33% knew of Family/Prevention Workers and an even lower number (29%) in urban centers were without knowledge of the same service. Isolated communities are at a loss for Crisis Counselors (37%) and not one person said there was a NNADAP Worker available in their community. A cutback in funding by the Department of Health and Welfare is also reflected in the NNADAP figures for urban and rural areas who both had only 22% available. The percentage for CHR/Referral Clerk availability in urban, rural and isolated areas were all below 29%, with Mental Health Workers at 45%, 22% and 13% respectively for each community. Education Counselors fared no better at 42%, 22% and 25% for urban, rural and isolated communities. The low numbers in the Chief and Band Counselor grouping is due to the fact that these are political personnel, only belonging to bands recognized under the Indian Act.

When looking at the satisfaction level of services available that is how the respondents viewed the services, there was not a high degree of contentment irrespective of residency. One cannot ever use 50% as a measurement in most cases because only 6 categories out of 40 had anything higher than that 50% (Even then, all but two figures are based upon results derived from an availability rate of less than 38%). Thirty (30%) is a more realistic number when measuring the most helpful category of services. Family/Prevention Workers scored three times over 30%, (twice over 50%), Crisis Counselors twice, (once over 50%), two times as well for NNADAP (three out of the four rural respondents who answered this question gave them a most helpful response). The CHR/Referral Clerk, and Chief columns also received one most helpful response each above 30%. But, when one compares the availability of services column with that which is the most helpful, only the Children's Aid received over 30% in all four residence classifications with an availability rate of over 50%. This may be due to the creation of six Aboriginally administered child and family service agencies in different regions of the province. Another reason may be due to the financial resources accessible to provincial Children's Aid Societies that enable them to provide care which is better than other community services.

When we break the statistics down by residency, one can see that there is a definite difference in the level of services. Those Aboriginal women living on reserves seem to have a better sense of the services available to them in comparison with other Aboriginal women living off reserve. The very nature of a reserve means it is a community where Aboriginal people are a majority and there will be a chief and council of the band. This is remarkably different from those Aboriginal people living in urban centers where there are no chiefs and counselors. This is also true for Metis and non-Status Indian communities living in rural and isolated communities. As well, because reserves are small, people living there are more apt to know what service personnel are present. The language difference will be a definite barrier for those who do not understand English, regardless of where they live, but especially for those off reserve who do not have some sort of financially supported political structure.

It should be noted that although the reserve residents had a higher availability ratio, they only rate three services over 30% as most helpful. This could imply that just because services

may be more plentiful, it does not always mean they are more helpful. This however does not deny that varied services are still needed; in an issue as complicated as family violence, there is no single answer that provides a fix-all solution.

The results of our questionnaire indicate that 86% of the respondents felt that it is the Aboriginal woman in a family violence situation who is the most likely to seek outside help. However, her fear and shame in seeking assistance usually means that it is not until her injuries are severe that she will actually see a doctor or call the police. When the victim does seek help she may turn to other relatives (55%); to friends (50%); to service providers (37%); to parents (14%); to neighbors (12%); to community leaders (11%); and to others, such as police, or the church (14%). Figures like those just mentioned send a clear signal that community education and awareness is desperately needed since people's top choice is to first turn to their own community. The fact that only 14% turn to the police once again testifies to the lack of faith Aboriginal people have for police protection. If the victim does turn to service agencies, she may have trouble locating assistance; or in finding help which will contribute to a long-term solution to her situation – rather than a short-term sheltering.

(i) Emergency and Shelter Services

The availability of shelter services, or safe homes, specifically for Aboriginal women in Ontario is scarce. While non-Aboriginal shelters do frequently provide temporary accommodation for Aboriginal women, there are serious problems with the adequacy of these services for our needs. Most non-Aboriginal shelters are located in urban areas which means the women must leave their community, frequently traveling a considerable distance, to find help. Moreover, the Aboriginal victim of family violence may even experience racism and further victimization at the shelter. For example, one recent study suggested that in a certain western Canadian province, some non-Aboriginal women who phoned shelter for assistance inquired whether Aboriginal women were residents or working at the shelter. It was said that if the answer was in the affirmative, they would try to seek other help elsewhere or were loath to stay with them. This atmosphere certainly is not conducive to the healing and strengthening of the abused Aboriginal woman and her children when often the other women and service personnel cannot fully identify with the racism Aboriginal women face.

Furthermore, the fact that non-Aboriginal shelters often have little awareness of the Aboriginal culture which causes the Aboriginal women who seek shelter to feel a certain amount of alienation. This alienation causes further withdrawal and therefore they do not open up to social workers or employees of the shelter. This problem is compounded by the fact that workers in non-Aboriginal homes do not speak Aboriginal languages, nor do they tend to be familiar with the wider problems which Aboriginal peoples encounter in the province. As one shelter worker has suggested, "Native women don't feel at home here. They come to us because there's nowhere else to go, but they don't really trust us... They are constantly worried that we'll call Child Welfare..." While this comment reveals the non-Aboriginal worker's view of the situation, the Aboriginal woman's view is more desperate. Also, non-Aboriginal shelters do not fully utilize the role of Native Elders and the extended family which is an integral part of the Aboriginal culture.

In the province of Ontario, there are only seven emergency shelters which are designed specifically to service the needs of Aboriginal women victims of family violence. These are the Atikokan Crisis Centre in Atikokan; Beendigne Inc. – Native Women's Crisis Home, in Thunder Bay; Native Women's Centre, in Hamilton; and, Anduhyuan Residence, in Toronto, Ojibway Family Reserve Centre, Nipissing Reserve, Moosonee Family Reserve Centre, Moosonee and one other in Mote. These provide only a very small number of beds for Aboriginal women and their children and in no way meet the needs of women for emergency sheltering. In fact, the location of these three homes requires a considerable amount of transportation for most Aboriginal women experiencing family violence. The fact that there are no shelters in the remote North, which has the largest percentage of Aboriginal people in Ontario and considering the amount of family violence, makes this situation truly appalling.

In addition to these shelters, there are other women's crisis homes which, while not designed specifically for Aboriginal women, do have a component of their services which attempt to address the needs of the abused Aboriginal women. Some of these include the Faye Peterson

Transition Home in Thunder Bay; Hoshizaki House, in Dryden; Women in Crisis, in Sioux Lookout; Rosewood Shelter, in Midland.

Considering that the incidence of Aboriginal Family Violence in Ontario is near 80%, these emergency resources are clearly inadequate. They are not designed specifically for Aboriginal women, or staffed by Aboriginal women, nor are they aimed at the rehabilitation of Aboriginal women – especially those who live in Northern Ontario.

Although frequent to non-Aboriginal run shelters, emergency referral services are provided for Aboriginal women, by at least one organization, the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre. Some community resource centers and family violence prevention workers also act as referees to local shelters or safe homes where Aboriginal women can stay temporarily for protection against repeated attacks. The following resource centers provide some information, in varying degrees of effectiveness, in Ontario:

Resource Centers

- Mississauga Family Resource Centre (Blind River)
- Kenora Family Resource Centre (Kenora)
- Northshore Family Resource Centre (Marathon)
- Haven House Family Resource Centre (Mindemoya)
- Weechahewin Centre, Moosonee Family Resource Centre (Moosonee)
- Ojibway Family Resource Centre (North Bay)
- Sioux Lookout Family Resource Centre (Sioux Lookout)
- Beendigen Inc. Native Women's Crisis Home (Thunder Bay)
- Nodin Counselling Service (Sioux Lookout)
- Native Women's Resource Centre (Toronto)
- Helping our Moms Effectively (Six Nations Reserve)

Prevention workers provide some pro-active services in the following communities in Ontario:

- Atenlos (London)
- Fort William Reserve (Thunder Bay)
- Naicatchewewin Band (Devlin)
- Rat Portage Band (Kenora)
- Pic Heron Bay Band (Heron Bay)
- Wikwemikong (Manitoulin Island)
- Native Community Crisis Team (Toronto)

This is the extent of services available either specifically, or at least with some special component, for Aboriginal women who experience family violence in Ontario. The clear inadequacy of these services does not, in our opinion, have to be emphasized. There are insufficient services available for Aboriginal women, and very little knowledge and education as to what is even available at present.

Women who want to utilize one of the four Aboriginally run shelters in Ontario must be prepared to, in the majority of cases, make long trips across the province, at great expense and inconvenience. Travel for women and children fleeing violent situations is often haphazard which in turn causes more delays. The Ministry of Community and Social Services pays travel expenses for women in some cases but it depends on where she is from, where she is going, her personal finances and other information. In other circumstances it is the band council, crisis shelter or women's group who helps in the financing of her travel expenses. Yet in other cases, it is the woman herself who must use what little funds she has to pay for her travel out of the abusive situation. The distant location of emergency services makes them an enviable service for most women who will likely have no option but to remain in the community and continue to suffer from physical and emotional abuse. The tragedy of this situation, given the levels of family violence in Aboriginal society, is unparalleled in non-Aboriginal society. Immediate steps must be taken to change this situation in which women are trapped.

(ii) Medical Services

Aboriginal women experiencing family violence are reluctant to seek medical attention for their mental and physical injuries. As noted in the previous section, the severity of injuries suffered as a result of family violence is dangerously high among Aboriginal people. Twenty-four (24%) of the respondents suggested that they knew of cases in which a woman sustained injuries which required medical treatment as a result of family violence, but did not seek medical attention out of fear and shame. Of those who did finally seek medical assistance, they repeatedly needed help for their injuries (according to 54% of our respondents).

Medical services are available for Aboriginal people, although not specifically for those experiencing family violence, in Thunder Bay at the Wequedong Lodge, and less so, in Sudbury through Manotsaywin Nanotoonjig. The Wequedong Lodge provides accommodations for Aboriginal people in the city seeking medical aid, assists with the rehabilitation after an illness, and in some cases, treatment for alcohol-related problems. There is a more developed network of treatment for Aboriginal persons suffering from alcohol, drug and solvent abuse; the National Native Alcohol and Drug Addiction Program has workers who operate in most communities and Friendship Centers. Moreover, the Federal Government provides assistance for community health workers, although their level of skill and training varies considerably, and it is not clear that they have the training to address Aboriginal family violence problems.

There is a definite need for more highly qualified Aboriginal persons in the medical professions (nurses, nurse's assistants, physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists). They need to be trained to identify family violence cases, to treat the victim and refer her and the family to a holistic rehabilitation program which includes treatment for alcohol abuse, and any other psychological and medical problems related to family violence. Until Aboriginal people have been trained, there must be a greater sensitization of non-Aboriginal personnel in the medical, social, and judicial sectors to Aboriginal traditions, culture and languages. The lack of Aboriginal people in the medical profession is another indication of the poor educational quality and culturally irrelevant material found in the schooling of Aboriginal young people. Generations of poor teaching and misunderstanding have created a climate of mistrust and hostility towards the whole educational system. The result is that Aboriginal people are not being served by the educational system at the very time when they need it the most to confront issues like family violence.

(iii) Rehabilitation for Batterer

In Ontario, there are no services presently in place, which are directed exclusively at the Aboriginal batterer. A proposal to set up, initially as a three-year pilot project, a therapeutic residential program by the Tikinagan Child and Family Services, has as its main objective the maintenance of the family in the community, in order to ensure the safety of women and children, by developing a comprehensive treatment program for the Aboriginal batterer. The proposal is highly innovative and the first of its kind in the Aboriginal community, which is arguably also a pioneer for the non-Aboriginal service community.

This pilot project would deliver a program involving counseling, and the restoration of the family in the community. The first year would be the development phase, creating a family violence prevention package and building a team of prevention officers. In the second year, the prevention workers would go out and train other teams in Aboriginal communities how to address family violence and raise community awareness. Finally, in the third year, a residence would be built in an Aboriginal community to heal, counsel and rehabilitate the abusers. By having the abuser leave the community, the victims could remain in their homes and receive community and family support. If the treatment centre were to be built in an isolated community, it would offer protection to the victims, while allowing the abuser time for contemplation, self-examination, and a chance to learn new skills for a better future. In creating a community response team, it is hoped that they can confront family violence when it happens early in a relationship and provide counseling. With these two programs working in cooperation, it is believed the abusers can be changed and be reunited with their families.

The Tikinagan proposal seeks to make the batterer account for his behavior and explore the reasons for violence and the ways to handle anger, frustration, and other social problems which Aboriginal men face. The proposal is sensitive to the problem of punishing batterers

because too often Aboriginal batterers are incarcerated while no rehabilitative services are provided. They suggest:

The punitive approach with no opportunities to help batterers make personal changes can result in leaving the individual even more angry and bitter. Probation officers have recounted incidents of such reactions, where men returning home are even more violent or abusive of their families or other women. The present system, which is reactive to crisis, tends to absolve the perpetrator from his responsibility for the violence essentially ignoring him and focusing attention on the victim. Women leave for temporary shelter, only to return back to the same situation. A program that forces the perpetrator to account for his behavior and provides an opportunity to change this behavior remains one of the best possibilities for a long term solution.

This residential treatment program for Aboriginal batterers would be a significant service development in Ontario if it was fully supported by the Provincial Government. The Ontario Native Women's Association supports the philosophy behind the Tikinagan project goals and believes the establishment of this treatment program would be a turning point in the development of community based solutions to Aboriginal family violence. We hope that it will be made operational as soon as possible. Regretfully, the Federal Government has turned down funds for this project, stating that the proposal was not written adequately, meaning they will have to re-apply at a later date, which means more delays for those who desperately need help.

(iv) Services for the Child

There are no rehabilitative programs in the Province of Ontario which are directed at the Aboriginal child who is either exposed to violence between his or her parents, or has been the victim of emotional, physical or sexual abuse by his or her parents. There are some child service agencies, which are Aboriginally controlled, and these focus on the protection of the child, trying to ensure that an Aboriginal child will remain in his or her community during difficult family times.

With greater resources and expertise, there is no reason why Aboriginal child social service agencies could not become involved in the rehabilitation of the child who has experienced the devastating effects of mental and physical abuse in his or her home. This kind of rehabilitation is particularly important because of the nature of family violence, and the fact that it tends to be passed on to children from violent homes. Indeed, in our questionnaire, in response to a question regarding the contributing factors in Aboriginal family violence, 22% responded that growing up in a home where violence is part of family life is a contributing factor. Moreover, when asked about the effect of family violence on other members of the family, the number one written response was the fear that the children would grow up and become abusers themselves. Immediate action is required to educate children about family violence and to rehabilitate them from the wounds and suffering which they have experienced or are experiencing in a violent home.

The following is a list of child services in Ontario which are Aboriginally controlled and capable of delivering services specifically for the child exposed to or personally victimized by family violence:

- Native Children's Program (Native Inter-Agency Council, Toronto)
- Dilico Ojibway Child and Family Services (Thunder Bay)
- Meno Bimahdizewin Child and Family Services (Thunder Bay)
- Mahmawenchike Inc. (Thunder Bay)
- Weechiittewin Family Services (Fort Frances)
- Tikinagan Child and Family Services (Sioux Lookout)
- Ojibway Tribal Family Services (Kenora)
- Payukotayno James and Hudson Bay Child and Family Services (Moosonee, Moose Factory, Attawapiskat, Kashechewan Fort Albany)

Additionally, several individual bands have child care workers who are responsible for monitoring the situation of children on the reserves and intervening when problems arise. This program, however, does have its limitations especially for children who have been abused and require serious help.

PART III – CANADIAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Although not a service available exclusively to the battered Aboriginal woman, the question of the appropriateness of involving the Canadian criminal justice system in Aboriginal family violence must be discussed in some detail. In the past decade there has been a movement within Canadian society to characterize spousal abuse as a crime and to encourage police forces to lay charges for assault under the Canadian Criminal Code in order to re-enforce the criminality and unacceptability of this behavior. Indeed, for an Aboriginal woman, calling the police may be the only option to defuse a life threatening situation.

Several Attorney Generals have spoken strongly in favor of the laying of criminal charges and have encouraged and financed education programs for police forces to implement this new policy. For example, the Ontario Attorney General, the Honorable Ian Scott, in announcing new measures to eliminate domestic violence, suggested that “ We will be moving the message of the family violence campaign from ‘ Break the Silence ‘ which was the first part of our awareness campaign to ‘ Wife Assault – It is a Crime.’ We want to reinforce the message once and for all, that wife assault is not a family affair, but a crime, and that those who batter their wives will have to be prepared to take the consequences.” While this new campaign may be entirely appropriate for non-Aboriginal society, what is of concern to us as Aboriginal women is whether or not this message, about the criminality of domestic violence, is one which is appropriate for Aboriginal society, especially in the broader context of Aboriginal-Canadian relations.

Indeed, the primary focus of the Government of Ontario’s approach to family violence is on enhanced criminalization, which is believed will reveal that “...violence by husband toward wife is no longer seen as a private matter but as a wrong which affects our society as a whole and which attracts the censure of society. It is a crime.” Other public education materials published by the provincial government key in on the criminality of wife abuse, encouraging women to involve the police, and have the police lay charges which means that “ the case is more likely to succeed in court”. This approach also seems to emphasize that “there is no excuse for battering” and that “the batterer is responsible for finding help”. If charges are laid against a batterer, by a wife or by the police, the batterer faces up to five years imprisonment, if the charge is prosecuted as an indictable offense, and, up to two years, with the possibility of a fine, if the charge proceeds as a summary conviction offence.

While there is some dispute whether or not charges are routinely laid by police after calls to violent family situations, the wider implications of involving Canadian police in Aboriginal family disputes must be considered. First, it should be emphasized that in traditional Aboriginal societies the notions of crime and punishment are profoundly different than in Anglo-European societies. There has never been imprisonment, and only in the most extreme cases of community wrongdoing would a member of a tribe be banished from his or her community, and even then it was for a limited time during which the individual would cleanse himself and renew his relationship to the Creator.

The idea of the extended family is vital to our Nations, and the welfare of any one member of our communities is important to everyone. This is the premise of our community life. Unfortunately, more than a century of Indian Act administration has tried to impose a different and foreign way of government on our communities, one which focuses on individualism and on dividing and assimilating families. However, this value of the extended family has not been lost. Our resistance to the Indian Act is a testament to this, because it has been, and always will be a foreign way of governing which is not appropriate for our ways of living.

The importance of the extended family means that we do not see the batterer as “responsible to find his own help” or on his own. We see family violence holistically as a community problem which requires healing of all members of the family. Of course, the needs and safety of the abused woman and children are more urgent at first. Our view is to restore and strengthen the family. This means that the man must also be cared for and be strengthened because physical violence like this is a form of weakness in our community. We abhor and regret the amount of family violence in Aboriginal society and we want it to stop. However, we also do not believe the abuser should be sacrificed; family violence is learned behavior and we believe it can be unlearned.

Another fundamental difference between Aboriginal society and Canadian society which is important in the family violence context, is the fact that Canadian Judges and police officers are not the respected and revered members of the community. The most respected members of our community are our Elders and Spiritual leaders – our Grandmothers, our hereditary chiefs, our clan mothers. It means very little to us to have a non-Aboriginal person come into reserve communities to enforce laws which we did not develop and do not recognize a “our” laws. This might be a powerful message for non-Aboriginal Canadians who see the Criminal Code as their law and their protection from wrongdoing, but the Canadian criminal law has served Aboriginal peoples very tragically. Indeed, this non-Aboriginal interference is often viewed as a problem and not a solution. The lack of Aboriginal members in Canadian police forces is a perfect example of the distrust between Aboriginal people and Canadian justice system; the issue goes beyond an affirmative action program, however sincere and comprehensive it may be.

We are mindful, of the whole problems of treatment of Aboriginal people by the Canadian criminal justice system and are aware that it is one in which has provoked outrage and concern from even the non-Aboriginal population. Aboriginal people constitute 10% of the overall prison population in Canada, and in some provinces more than 32% of the prison population, while we make up only 2% of the overall population of the country. Obviously, there is something very wrong with the application of the Canadian criminal justice system to Aboriginal Peoples. Racism and paternalism result in considerably more prison sentences than the non-Aboriginal population, and the lack of understanding on the part of the Canadian legal profession for our values and our approach to life is reflected in these revealing figures. Aboriginal people are also more apt to plead guilty on a charge because of their unfamiliarity with legal procedures and the desire to be out of court as soon as possible.

It is thus with reservation we call upon the protection of the Canadian justice system. On one hand, there is reluctance to court the justice system because of its treatment of Aboriginal people and the animosity which exists between us, and on the other hand, Aboriginal women and children need protection. Therefore, until an Aboriginal criminal justice system is developed, we must rely on the present system, making it more receptive to our concerns and using the knowledge gained to build that Aboriginal justice system. Abusers should be charged and made to take mandatory counseling.

This sentiment was overwhelming expressed by the respondents to our questionnaire; 82% said the abuser should be charged, 14% did not know, and 4% said no to charging. Ranked in order as to why abusers should be reported and charged, the major responses were as follows: stopping the violence for the victims safety; because it is a crime; so the abuser can get help; because the victims safety; because it is a crime; so the abuser can get help; because the victims are too scared to lay charges; to set an example; and, because everyone has a right to without violence. At least 8% also mentioned that they were not pleased with the condescending and insensitive attitudes on the part of police officers. This is again reflected in the service availability satisfaction, only 6% mentioned police and 67% of that 6% said the police service they received was not of much help. For those respondents who said no to charging, the major reason given was because they felt that healing and not punishment was required.

The help received from charging abusers has to be more that the institutionalized racism and mistreatment of a hostile prison environment; it must be culturally relevant, developed by Aboriginal people with the aim of rehabilitation for both victims and abusers. The police must take the pleadings of Aboriginal women seriously and enforce trespass orders against the abuser. Mass sensitization is needed on the part of the police forces along with sincere and comprehensive affirmative action programs to have more Aboriginal Canadians within their ranks. The law makers also need sensitization to the concerns of Aboriginal people; recognition of Aboriginal treaty rights in the area of hunting, fishing and harvesting, plus joint revenue and management agreements would go along way in rebuilding the relationship between two groups. An understanding of legal procedure and ways to change laws should be encouraged within Aboriginal communities as well.

Not surprisingly, a recent study by a Committee of the Canadian Bar Association, a very conservative group in Canadian society, has recommended to the Association that Aboriginal Peoples’ authority set up our own justice system. It would utilize Elders and respected community leaders to oversee wrongdoing in our communities should be urgently established.

These recommendations have been put forward by Aboriginal Peoples in Canada for decades. Nor is it unprecedented in Canadian legal history. The Code Civil legal system in Quebec was allowed to continue by both British and Canadian Governments because it was viewed culturally sensitive to the Quebecois and perceived as their own justice system, perhaps we will be able to establish culturally appropriate ways of dealing with misconduct in our communities.

In light of the scarcity of other services available for Aboriginal women in Ontario, it is likely that a reliance on police and Canadian law enforcement officers will continue until such time as proper services can be instituted. This however, is not to say that existing services are appropriate or even adequate.

(i) Legal Services

Aboriginal women in Ontario are not entitled to any special legal services if they are seeking assistance in situations of family violence. Most Indian Friendship centers have Aboriginal Court Workers who will assist those who have been charged with criminal offenses, which may be of assistance to Aboriginal batterers, but of little help to the women victims. Aboriginal women can apply for legal aid or attend a legal aid clinic if one is available near their community. Women in remote communities, or those who speak very little English, will have great difficulty in either finding a lawyer to assist them (even if one is available, he or she may not handle cases on legal aid), or one who speaks an Aboriginal language, let alone their Aboriginal language.

There are three Aboriginal legal aid clinics in Ontario, including Kinna-Aweya Legal Clinic located in Thunder Bay District, Ontario. In addition, one emergency shelter specifically for Aboriginal women, Anduhyuan, has established an Aboriginal legal aid services program staffed by law students, to assist women with their legal problems arising from family violence. These legal services, while encouraging, are clearly insufficient in servicing the needs of Aboriginal families experiencing family violence.

(ii) Access to Matrimonial Property in Situations of Family Violence

Matrimonial property is but another example of how institutional racism and sexism have been used to divide Aboriginal people over time. Metis, non-Status and Status Indian women living off reserves are not under Federal jurisdiction; their rights to matrimonial property are subject to Provincial legislation. In Ontario, they fall under the Family Law Act. Under this Act, Aboriginal women are entitled to matrimonial property and can seek a temporary occupancy order in their name. As this law is still quite new, more study and research are required to see if Aboriginal women are acquiring matrimonial property. For Aboriginal women living on reserves the case is not so simple, as it never is for Aboriginal women.

Even if an Aboriginal woman living on a reserve can get legal services, the legal remedies which she may be entitled to are considerably circumscribed by the regulation of Indian life by the Federal Government through the Indian Act. There is a particular legal problem for Aboriginal women in gaining interim occupancy of matrimonial property on a reserve during violent family situations; this is a very critical issue which is important for women in maintaining her cultural and social life on a reserve.

This issue has been considered in a recent report to the Ontario Government entitled " Aboriginal Family Violence and Matrimonial Property Standards on Indian Reserves " which details the problems Aboriginal women encounter in seeking legal protection of their occupancy of the matrimonial home in cases of family violence. The recommendations suggested in this recent study are included as an appendix to this Report because they dovetail with our own proposals for action. We will not review the matrimonial property problem because it has been dealt with elsewhere. A short overview of the problem should suffice. As a consequence of two Supreme Court of Canada decisions in 1986, Aboriginal woman cannot seek an order for temporary occupancy of the matrimonial home under the usual Provincial family legislation such as the Ontario Family Law Act.

These two judgments, Derrickson and Paul, arose from cases in which women who lived on reserves in their matrimonial homes, applied under family legislation in British Columbia for orders with respect to possession or interim occupation of their property. The Paul case is the more relevant of the two as it involved an Aboriginal woman from the Tsarslip Indian Reserve who sought an order for interim possession of her matrimonial home after repeated verbal and physical assaults from her husband. Her request for the interim order was ultimately rejected by

the Supreme Court of Canada because of the regulatory scheme of Indian lands prescribed by the Indian Act. The Court held that provincial family law standards regulating the division of property or the interim possession of property was inapplicable on Indian reserves because of the exclusive federal jurisdiction over “ Indian and lands reserved for the Indians “ granted by the Constitution Act, 1867, section 91(24).

While the decision was supported by many leaders in the Aboriginal community because it clearly opposed provincial regulation of Indian lands, the unfortunate ramification of the decision is that Aboriginal women who are in abusive family situations on reserves have no legal protection of their interests in the matrimonial home. They will not be able to apply under provincial family legislation for an interim order for possession, because Provincial family legislation is of no application. Moreover, the Indian Act prescribes no standards on such family law in areas of as child custody, adoption, support payments, or the division of matrimonial property, so there is no other recourse for the abused woman. The same is true of women seeking a division of matrimonial assets, although this wider problem is less directly related to the needs of the Aboriginal woman in a violent family situation.

The Supreme Court of Canada did not seem unduly concerned about the implications of the decision for Aboriginal women. Mr. Justice Chouinard, writing the unanimous decision of the Court, simply suggested, quoting a Canadian constitutional authority, that “whether such laws are wise or unwise is of course a much controverted question, but it is not relevant to their constitutional validity”. However, what is relevant us as Aboriginal women is the fact that we have no legal protection of our interest in matrimonial property on an Indian reserve. In the Paul case, Pauline Paul ended up having no legally enforceable right to her matrimonial home, a home which she helped to build and which she lived in for more than sixteen years.

This situation of inaccessibility to matrimonial property is another extension of the divisions caused by regulation in our lives which, have as their consequence, the inequality of Aboriginal women. Aboriginal women are divided between Federal and Provincial jurisdictions. Those on reserves are divided between those who support provincial laws regarding matrimonial laws as it promotes equality for women. Others, living on reserves, feel this is a precedent for more provincial intrusions into their jurisdictions. It also creates divisions between men and women as the property on reserves is often listed in the man’s name. In legal terms, this brings up the issue of individual rights, collective rights, equality rights and which rights belong to which group or person. It becomes a never ending circle where more efforts are made at resolving conflicts within Aboriginal society than our relations to the broader Canadian population. Aboriginal women have seen the same kind of inequality in terms of Indian Status upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada in the 1970’s with the Lavell and Bedard judgments. In those cases, the court confirmed the sexist treatment of Aboriginal women through section 1 (12) (b) of the Indian Act. In retrospect this is but a manifestation of the old colonial divide and mentality.

One noteworthy aspect of the matrimonial property problem is the fact that there has been virtually no initiative to change this situation to ensure Aboriginal women a legally protected right to stay in their own homes on reserve, especially when children are involved, and remaining in the community is essential for their education and knowledge of their own culture and language. When the problem was raised with the Minister of Indian Affairs by our parent organization, the Native Women’s Association of Canada, the Minister responded. “I sympathize with the plight of women in the circumstances that you have outlined. There is, however, very little concrete action that I can take to help matters within the framework of the present legislation. You may wish to advise me whether or not your organization would support an amendment to the Indian Act.”

Aboriginal organizations have rejected continued piecemeal amendments to the Indian Act to clean up countless little gaps and problems of federal regulation of Aboriginal life. An amendment to the Indian Act introducing comprehensive family law standards for Indian reserves would likely be a worse situation involving increased bureaucratic control and paternalism. The underlying problem, as was canvassed in the introduction to this Report, is the need for Aboriginal self-government, and the development of community standards which regulate property in situations of family violence, according to the values of Aboriginal people in the community.

In any event, the problem of legal in access to matrimonial property remains, and the needs of Aboriginal women for sheltering are, as a result of this problem, much more immediate and severe than for the non-Aboriginal population who can get an interim occupancy order.

PART IV – SURVEY OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

The second part of Aboriginal Family Violence Project was to interview and solicit opinions from community service workers across the province working for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations. It is noteworthy that the majority of those questioned were Aboriginal people, who while having expertise in the social services by way of their education also bring to their jobs a unique cultural background and understanding to the people they serve. In total, our project staff contacted forty two agencies either by written survey or by conversation from all regions of the province as well as other social workers from Manitoba. Besides attending conference on family violence and the utilization of Elders, the team conducted four information workshops on this subject in Kenora, Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Toronto for our locals and other interested persons.

Of the thirty two service professionals interviewed, no specific statistics were made although common themes can be seen running through their answers. Everyone recognized family violence as a definite problem but that it was for the most part, something either hidden or tolerated by some. Of those scarce services distinctly designed for Aboriginal People, few were aimed at family violence and an even fewer number of people were trained specifically to deal with violent family situations. This is compounded by the fact that almost every service provider comes in contact with family violence, either directly or indirectly.

Public awareness at the community level and an education program on family violence was the most commonly recommended measure so that women, children, men and Elders realize the severity of the situation and the alternatives for them. On the immediate level, more crisis housing, crisis intervention teams programs for batterers and children are required. Every service provider, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal requested more information on how to deal with family violence, especially on the more difficult issue of child abuse and incest.

In the long term, more trained Aboriginal service providers working for Aboriginal social service agencies need to be developed. The holistic approach to family violence must be pursued to address the individual, the family, the extended family, and the community. Finally, the whole issue of Aboriginal Peoples struggle within Canadian society, the loss of their identity and power relationships within Aboriginal culture must be addressed.

(i) A Holistic Approach

All Aboriginal and some non-Aboriginal service providers see the need to address Aboriginal family violence within the environment from which it stems. Everyone knew the Aboriginal concept of family was one of the extended family. In smaller communities, it was said the extended family really means the community itself. With the exception of three non-Aboriginal organizations, all respondents agreed that a holistic approach was the best means to tackle family violence. A holistic method of treatment is meant to encompass not only the nuclear family but also the extended family, neighbors, as well as different treatment methods.

This holistic approach is reflected as the response to what should be the focus of a study and what programs should be developed. Most said that a study should be broadened to include all people affected by a violent family situation. Both Theodore Debussige, the child welfare supervisor at West Bay Band and Barbara Cochrane of Grassy Narrows Band state "As the community itself is part of the problem, so also does the community have to be part of the solution". Programs should be directed not only at the abused spouse/partner but the abuser, children, and relatives. Prevention policy should also be developed in such a way extending beyond the actual family situation, to bring about new life skills.

Every respondent said that programs were needed for men. Two people said all the efforts to stop family violence have been directed at women while men are being left behind. Chief Coulis, program director of the Del-Art Manor, a recovery home for men with alcohol problems, said a family violence program should be created along with a drug and alcohol program. Al Spendlow, manager of the Pine Community Resource Centre, a half-way house in Kenora, said he was surprised that there was no home for Aboriginal men who are abusive of their families. He also said many of the men in his care had been involved in abusive situations in the past, yet none were court mandated to the Pines on family violence related charges.

All Native organizations and most of the non-Aboriginal organizations recognized the need to develop programs culturally appropriate for Aboriginal People. Colin Wasacase,

executive director of the Ojibway Tribal Family Council, the Ojibway run family and child service agency for the Kenora region, stated that spiritualism, music, language, life skills, feasts, the ways of the Elders and the use of sweat lodges should be brought into a program. Rosalyn Copenace of Community Counseling for Addictions and Maria Linklater of Beendigen, an Aboriginal Crisis Centre in Thunder Bay both echoed this sentiment stating that more efforts should be directed at traditional values and teaching of the family.

The use of Elders in any program was a common suggestion as was a return to the traditional values of respect and dignity for all people. In a note of desperation, Sarah Borsfai of STEP, a youth program in Kenora says it is very important to make use of the Elders who stress the old ways because once they have passed away, there will be no one left to teach young people who are losing their values.

Any type of program for family violence must be designed in such a way as to make all individuals as relaxed as possible. There is a need for more Native speakers in the shelters and in other social service agencies for those people who wish to speak their first language. Pat Robinson of N'Swakamok Friendship Centre in Sudbury and Coin Wasacase said achieving that stress-free environment is even more difficult when you have to remove Aboriginal people from their families and communities for either training to address the problem or for the victims fleeing violence. Judy Smith of Hoshizaki House, a crisis shelter in Dryden, said she has had difficulties communicating with Aboriginal people, especially those women from northern isolated communities. Thus any type of shelter or training facility should be built close to the home environment of those experiencing family violence in the efforts of reducing stress.

The above mentioned problems are illustrated by complaints registered by non-Native Shelters. Not only does going to a shelter require Aboriginal women to leave their families and communities, it means they must usually go to non-Aboriginal shelters in environments which are culturally different and often hostile. In the 1986 Aboriginal family violence survey by Jane Riddell and Pauline Doxtator it was reported that Aboriginal Women need three to seven days to come out of shock at crisis homes due to the non-verbal traditions of some Aboriginal Women compared with a lesser amount of time for non-Aboriginal women. At least two surveyed groups criticized Geneva House in Sudbury for being culturally insensitive to Aboriginal Women and too busy to attend to other Aboriginal service providers concerns.

(ii) Education and Training

One of the most intriguing things about the survey was to look at the general education level of the respondents and their experience in family violence prevention. Of the twenty seven people who listed their educational background, eighteen had some post-secondary education ranging from community college diplomas to masters degrees. Of those in or having graduated from university and college programs, five were in social work, four studied education, three had taken nurses training, three more were in mental health programs, two had religious degrees, and one with a business degree; another was in the sciences and later became a police officer. Of those who had only attended high school, three had graduated, yet almost all had taken some kind of counseling program.

While the level of education was quite good, the amount of training in the field of family violence was minimal. Only six people had taken some in-depth courses in family violence, with two receiving their training in Detroit, Michigan and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Only seven people had attended workshops on the issue and a startling number of thirteen people had no training at all.

These numbers are distressing. Social work programs in colleges and universities must address the issue of family violence, why it happens and how it can be stopped with practical training. According to Charles Castlemen of First Step, a counseling program for abusers in Thunder Bay, weekend workshops are not enough training for service providers who are required to recognize and deal with family violence matters; the issue is far too complex and demands months of training to familiarize the counselor. All of the respondents said that there was a definite need for more Aboriginal counselors and community aid workers.

In response to the lack of training, the respondents were almost unanimous in their desire for more training with regards to family violence. Randy Councillor of the Ne'Chee Friendship Centre in Kenora said that while he had academic training for family violence counseling, he expressed a common concern that traditional Native counseling methods were needed as well.

At least two organizations, Wicshan of Sioux Lookout and Key North wanted counseling not only for the victim but for the staff in having to deal with stress, burn-out, and learning how to detach themselves from their cases. For those few agencies which had extensive training in dealing with family violence, more information and guidance was desperately needed to address the needs of victims of sexual abuse and incest.

(iii) Incidence of Family Violence

When one contrasts the previous mentioned figures concerning education on family violence against the number of family violence service available, one can see the needs of Aboriginal People are not being met. Every agency said they saw family violence in one form or another. Five organizations said over ninety percent (90%) of their cases dealt with the issue, three groups said it affected over fifty percent, another three groups said it was between twenty-five and fifty percent, and two said they saw it twenty-five percent of the time. For those who did not see family violence directly, they saw it indirectly through family breakdown, alcoholism, suicide, child behavioral problems and mental illness. Nine groups dealt with the issue on a front-line basis through counseling and the same number said they gave referrals to other agencies.

As to the issue of incest and sexual abuse, the respondents felt it was a difficult thing to handle and for the most part, remains hidden. Only seven agencies said they had to knowingly deal with the issue out in the open and help people who are victims and abusers. More people, however, mentioned suicide as a problem which must be confronted as suicide victims abuse both the victim and abusers; they abuse themselves along with others around them who must deal with their loss. Elder abuse and child neglect were also stated as a form of family abuse.

Four out of six people answered in the affirmative as to whether they had encountered an abusive situation in their own personal life. One woman from a Southern Ontario Friendship Centre honestly summed up her situation by stating that she had been abused by her mother as a child and later was abused in a personal relationship for a period. Now she can see her childhood had an effect on her later life and luckily, she was able to seek counseling. Psychological abuse towards his wife and their children was cited by one president of a Metis association local, as a result of alcoholism.

All of the respondents thought family violence a big problem in Native communities, but some, mostly non-Natives saw it as no different as family violence in any other ethnic groups. Theodore Debassige expressed that while family violence is a problem, it is connected to the wider problem of communication breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse and child neglect. Implicit in this comment is the fact that family violence is but another symptom of greater problems; lack of direction, non-identity, insecurity and deterioration of values.

Most organizations said that family violence was very much a hidden subject where people remained fearful to talk about it. Three organizations did say things are changing somewhat, much to the credit of media publicity over spousal abuse and police charging the abuser. According to Wally McKay, executive director at Tikinagan Child and Family Services in Sioux Lookout, when he mentioned the subject of family violence in a chiefs meeting five years ago, you could have heard a pin drop, but three years later, the Chiefs of Nishnawbe Aski Nation accepted a plan to create a traveling community response team and a treatment centre for batterers.

Tragically, most (fourteen) organizations saw family violence as a way of life for some Aboriginal communities. Only two agencies said they could not say one way or another if family violence was an accepted way of life and the others surveyed did not answer this question. Many agencies said that the situation had become critical; children see violence as they grow up so they accept it later if it happens to them. One of the most shocking statements came from Alex Gunner of Paynkotano Child and Family Services in Moosonee; he said that many women accept their situation because they are told to do so by their parents. Rosalyn Copenace said everyone knows what is going on but the attitude of some was that the women deserve it. Obviously this kind of attitude demonstrates that social services are not reaching these women; they are afraid, they may not know what services are available to them, and they do not know that they have a right to live in a violence free environment.

(iv) Residency

When asked whether there was a difference between reserves and urban communities in relation to family violence, the answer was yes. Many mentioned the lack of social services, day care and poor means of transportation in and out of the isolated communities when compared to urban centers. Whereas these are the apparent reasons women do not leave isolated communities, there are other factors which go beyond the question of service availability. Loren Mitchell says that there is a different lifestyle and way of thinking on reserves; if someone leaves, often they are perceived as abandoning their family and thus when they return, they are outcasts. Just the fact that reserves or isolated settlements are small means that there is no escaping public scrutiny especially for an issue as contentious as spousal abuse.

Little, however was said as to how to fully address the problems of those living in rural and remote areas. Many, like Charles Castlemen said while the violence may be the same, the factors involved differ somewhat. Randy Councillor said each community is different in size and character, some reserves are still very traditional, while others are less so. On the other hand it was said that urban areas bring their own set of problems due to cultural change, prejudice, alienation, loneliness and easy access to drugs and alcohol. Importantly, Loren Mitchell points out that there must be no discrimination according to status or residence for services provided.

When one compares the views of the community care professionals with those seen in the surveys among Aboriginal women, both identify the diversity found within the population of Aboriginal women in Ontario. The two surveys recognize the need for more services in rural and isolated communities which are often overlooked by the Federal Government because they are a Metis community, a non-Status band, or Status band without a reserve. The Provincial Government in turn responds by saying Aboriginal people are a federal matter. Caught in the cross-fire are those Aboriginal people, unrecognized by the Federal Government, who certainly did not wish to be divided by some self-sustaining bureaucratic mechanism of internal control. The low satisfaction levels among reserve residents confirms the need for better services in those areas.

Many of the social workers may have assumed that Aboriginal people residing in urban areas are adequately cared for by the services there-in, but the urban respondents are saying just the opposite. Urban Aboriginal women feel that while services may be available, these services are not assisting them in crisis situation with culturally appropriate care. This recognizes that even when Aboriginal people are living in urban centers, they do not stop being Aboriginal people or forsake their traditional healing methods. Aboriginal social service agencies for urban Aboriginal people could very much aid those people coming to cities and towns for the first time and who find it difficult to adjust to their new environment.

The solution to family violence in each of these Aboriginal communities, be they on a reserve, in a rural setting or in the city, lies within the community themselves. But for this to happen, funds must be available so they can develop intervention and prevention programs to suit their special needs. For the isolated communities, consultation over such things as new transportation links, social services and communications facilities must occur before any of these development take place. A good family violence program, heightened awareness, and strong community support may reduce the amount of family violence just as much as better telephone and road links. In urban areas, second stage housing was said to be a constant problem since victims often remain in cities after they have gone to a crisis shelter.

(v) Alcohol

All but one of the respondents said alcohol was associated with family violence yet most recognized that it was not the cause. Donna Bowes-Dhezze of Geneva House, a crisis home in Sudbury suggested alcohol is a facilitator of family violence while Al Spendlow says alcoholism only seems to mystify the problem. Loren Mitchell correctly stated that even without the violence, alcoholism is a form of mental cruelty, only about five percent of his community is sober. In recounting her personal experience with family violence, Donna Johnson says the violence occurred just as much when the abuser was sober. The use of alcohol is backed up in the questionnaires: Aboriginal women said 78% of the cases of family violence was alcohol related.

There seemed to be a mixed reaction as to whether a stoppage in alcohol would lead to a reduction of family violence. Seven people said stopping alcohol use would reduce family violence but six stated that it would not necessarily reduce family violence. Two people gave an

emphatic “No” while another four gave suggestions of how to deal with the problem. Most respondents would probably agree that a stoppage in alcohol usage would not stop family violence; as it is not the cause but it might lead to a reduction in violence because those who recognize why they drank might also realize why the abuse their families and, therefore, seek counseling. Courses for the abuser by the Chatham-Kent Community and Family Services, Wamawai Centre in Winnipeg and First Step in Thunder Bay require clients to first deal with their alcohol or drug addiction before enrolling in their program.

Lucy Bannon of Beendigen, an Aboriginal crisis shelter in Thunder Bay reminds people that alcoholism is a disease, family violence is learned behavior. She also states that abstention from alcohol may reduce the physical violence, but it may not solve the problem of mental cruelty if the abuser only thinks the problem is due to alcohol. Lucie Rice and Judy Smith, who happen to work in two other crisis shelters in Sudbury and Dryden both write that facilities for both problems are inadequate and what is needed are co-coordinated treatment programs for substance and family abuse.

(vi) The Situation of the Aboriginal Abusers

Almost all the respondents said that there needs to be services directed at the abusers. In the survey, some community aid workers felt too many efforts were directed at women, and men were being left behind. While it is true that only recently, counseling groups have started for abusers, there still is a great need for more shelters and services to women and children. There is not one house for batterers in Canada which enables the abuse spouse/partner and children to remain in their matrimonial home. Instead of sending the abuser away for healing, it is the spouse/children who must leave their communities, families and home, sometimes with just the shirts on their backs. As stated earlier, the Tikinagan proposal has tried to address this problem with their therapeutic residential program for men.

Changes in society beg the question; what is the role for Aboriginal men? They have a dominant non-Aboriginal society saying they have to be strong, keep their feelings inside, never cry, and be the head of the household. This is very much reflected in the amount of services offered to men, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. There is no crisis housing for men be they abuser or abused, and no programs for male single parents, or resource centers for men with counseling services like there is for women. It is always assumed that men do not have mental problems because they are in control of the situation. Linda Sherman, a mental health counselor at Tikinagan says that there have been great changes in the role of Aboriginal women over the past ten years within the family and the community. Yet men are still trying to be head of the household and chief bread winner within a rapidly changing society.

The male values espoused by Euro-Canadian society are very much at odds with Aboriginal male culture which promotes silent strength, invulnerability, self-sufficiency, dignity and worth to all living things, sensitivity, and respect. Added to these cultural conflicts is the high rate of unemployment, low levels of education, poverty, prejudice and a stifling of leadership potential due to a government system that removes all sense of pride with these men. Thus they look for some power relationship which validates the demands placed upon them, and the only place this can happen is within their family, which in themselves are feeling cultural conflicts as well.

(vii) The Agencies

Of the social service professionals who completed the survey, thirteen belonged to agencies for the general public and twenty-eight were aimed at Aboriginal People. Of those public agencies, only two had any sort of cultural program for Aboriginal people and only four had some connection with an Aboriginal organization. However, ten people could name someone to call in the event of having to deal with a family violence situation and eleven organizations could think of programs directed to Aboriginal people in their area.

Every organization however said there was a definite need for greater resource sharing, and some spoke of the need for a directory of Aboriginal groups and organizations. Eleven had or were in the process of getting computers and they expressed a desire for computer networking with other agencies.

When looking at the ages of the surveyed social agencies, it is easy to see that there will be a steady demand for more of them in the future. Of those organizations which gave their dates of inception, two began in the period 1965-1969, two again from 1970-1974, three from

1975-1984. This trend is bound to continue for there were seven new organizations started in the lesser period of 1985 to early 1988. Moreover the Aboriginal run organizations are newer than the non-Aboriginal agencies; three non-Aboriginal agencies began from 1985-1988, seven from 1980-1984, and one started in the period 1975-1979. The fact that most of the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal agencies stated that there is a need for more culturally sensitive services to Aboriginal people, which strengthens the view that there will be even more Aboriginal service agencies in the future.

While it is encouraging to see so many new Aboriginal organizations coming about, this does not solve all the problems. There may be organizational difficulties in the early stages of their mandate. These new organizations must however be careful not to operate as an isolated entity, but rather to function in co-operation with other services, trying to achieve a holistic approach in counseling. Often social agencies, work in isolation and in competition with each other. This is due mainly to their differing mandates and funding arrangements that stem from the level of government they serve. They must justify and expand work loads, personnel and budgets which in turn create a greater demand for funds. As a result, it is not unusual that clients can get referred to three or four counselors which are not only financially imprudent but frustrating for the individual in need of assistance.

Now the creation and expansion of Aboriginal self-governing agencies offers a chance for some Aboriginal people to be served by one agency, which looks on the person and his or her total environments. In the Rainy River – Fort Frances region of Ontario, the Aboriginal service agencies recently met with the regional chiefs and formulated a plan to try and create such a program where young people would be served by one counselor for many needs.

Another problem for many of these agencies surveyed was the geography they covered. Only two said they served a local sphere, the other twelve agencies who answered that question stated that they served a large territory, which ranged from the Pine Centre in Kenora which covers all of Canada to Key North which serve the Manitoulin Island – Parry Sound area. Even the Friendship Centers serve large constituencies as they help those Aboriginal people coming into municipalities from outlying communities. Because most Aboriginal communities are small, they must group together in creating regional social service agencies to maximize their effectiveness. This has a negative side in that the amount of local control and input is reduced.

It is interesting to note, the funding sources for the agencies. By far the vast majority were financed by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. Considering the fact that the Constitution Act, 1867, section 91:24 designates “Indians” and lands reserved for Indians as being under the federal jurisdiction, without differentiating their ‘status’, which is in itself a non-Aboriginal concept, as the Constitution Act, 1982 affirms this with recognition of “Indians, Inuit and Metis”, as being Aboriginal people under section 35(2), leads one to deduce that the Federal Government is not contributing as much as it should in relation to these social services. Other funding sources within the Provincial Ministries were the Northern Development, Solicitor General, Parole and Corrections and Health. Those funding agents within the Federal Government were the Department of Health and Welfare, Indian and Northern Development, Secretary of State, and Justice. Lastly there was a small amount of monies given by municipal and regional governments.

Inevitably this creates confusion as to where one can get funds. Those organizations most experienced at fund raising get help from many levels of government while those with less experience are confined to a single funding source. A single funding agency can be beneficial if the stream of funds always meets the organizational needs, because it allows their organization more time to devote to duties other than fund raising. This, however, is not usually the case, and more often than not, organizations must put energy in to searching for new funding sources as a means to diversify and cushion the blow if the major funding body cuts resources.

Although new Aboriginal organizations may face some of the above mentioned problems, this is no reason to limit or slow the progress of self-governing Aboriginal agencies. Aboriginal people will not be able to take control of their lives and truly feel served without these organizations. The only way for Aboriginal people to learn how to provide the services they need is through experience and this is where the necessity for more and better funding arrangements is definitely required.

(viii) Solutions

The questionnaire asked respondents to give short and long term solutions to the problem, but it is difficult to classify them as such. Jim Whitehead of the Chatham-Kent Community and Family Services plainly said there are no easy answers to family violence whereas Catherine Bedows of Key North, and employment agency for Aboriginal women in Sudbury said you must look at all the causative factors involved and not band-aid solutions. It is easy to wish family violence would stop immediately, but life is not as simple as that. Victims and perpetrators of family violence are hurting, psychologically and physically, and like any individual with a mental illness, they must be convinced there is a problem and that there is hope for a solution.

Undeniably the number one answer from respondents was that there be community awareness of the problem and a desire by the Aboriginal people themselves to ruse up and confront the issue. It was suggested that to achieve this community awareness goal, key people in the community are needed to start an anti-family violence program. Different types of communications are also need to reach people effectively. In terms of specifics, culturally appropriate services are definitely needed as are an education program in the schools on family violence and programs for the abusers.

The most important group in the Aboriginal community to reach is women. At least two respondents said family violence will not stop unless women find the strength to confront this issue, bring it into the open and assert their rights. But this is very difficult to accomplish, for when women are being abused they are fearful. The fear then leads to a personal philosophy of recidivism; an acceptance and passivity to the violence, one where the ideal of living in a violence-free household is replaced by one of how to minimize the abuse. The task of helping these women is to de-program that psychology and create an environment where they have the courage to bond together and say no more; family violence is not acceptable in their community.

It is undoubtedly very difficult form many community leaders to deal with the matter of family abuse, as often they are reluctant to get involved in family matters. But family violence is not a personal or even a family issue; it affects the whole community on a spiritual, social, mental, and physical level, whether the community is on a reserve, in a rural area, or in a city. It saps the energies and strength of a community when they are needed in other places for more productive uses. Community leasers have a responsibility to promote the well being and welfare of their people and family violence is something they must help to stop. Family violence committees could be set up to recruit and train people on this issue, both in terms of counseling and how to react to a family violence situation.

At least two respondents, Theodore Debassige and Charles Castlemen recognized the importance of Elders. By using their knowledge of the traditional teaching and healing methods for those in abusive relationships, the Elders provide in-house counseling services. They are good listeners and can provide moral guidance for the younger generations. Moreover they are respected and can bring the issue of family violence to the forefront of the community.

Although the issue of charging the abuser was not a question on the survey, it was mentioned only three times by the service professionals with two being in favor and one opposed. Josephine Mandamin, Executive Director of Beendigen said if anyone should be educated on family violence, it is Judges, since sentencing is far too lenient and restraining orders are not being respected. To change this, she suggests putting pressure on Judges in the same manner that was used to deal with drinking and driving. Charles Castlemen echoes this sentiment remarking that only four men out of 140 over the past two years have been court mandated to take counseling in the First Step Program. Linda Sherman a mental health worker at Tikinagan could not think of any court mandated treatment for abusers in her work. At Atenlos, an organization serving Aboriginal women, in London, they are trying to get court workers to help the victims of family violence by informing them of their rights, how to deal with the judicial system, as well as, how to cope with new family dynamics.

(ix) Family Violence Education in the Schools

The most common answer given for where to direct information on family violence is to bring it into the schools and aim it at the children. Fourteen respondents said that the children and youths must be educated on this issue. The purpose of this is to not only reinforce that family violence is unacceptable but also to identify and help those children who have been abuse.

Teachers may be reluctant to have this matter brought up in school due to their lack of counseling skills and the fear that they will end up becoming social workers. Parents may also be opposed to this idea since it might scare their children or expose their own family violence situations. These attitudes, however meaningful, must be overlooked because schools are the only place where mass socialization and information dissemination can take place. If schools can teach the values of dignity and respect of the individuals, they have accomplished a far greater service to their students and community than any academic class. Addressing this subject would also help students concentrate more on their studies, by putting family violence into perspective; it would make them feel better about themselves, and their families which in turn will aid them in their academic success.

Each school needs a counselor or someone trained to deal with students who need help when the subject is brought up. While sessions on family violence must be taught in such a manner as to bolster the individual, they also must recognize the importance of the family. According to Pauline Doxtator project manager of the Native Women's Needs Assessment Survey, condemning the perpetrator will not help the situation. While in no way does she condone family violence, she says the issue must be addressed in a loving manner, where individuals are encouraged to face the problem knowing there is still family support for them to seek help. To break the cycle of family violence, it has to start with the children; teach them when they are young, so when they grow older, they will not be victims of family violence like their parents.

(x) Communication Tools

As a means of reaching people, different types of communication methods were recommended. The use of videos was mentioned by five organizations as the most effective way to reach people. Three organizations suggested role playing and theatre as an effective learning tool. Another three agencies said testimonies by victims, abusers, children and those involved in family violence situations were useful means to educate people on the subject. A family violence hot line was another recommendation.

Out of fifteen organizations, all but the Chatham-Kent Community and Family Services said that they did not see a need to educate non-Aboriginal agencies to the concerns of Aboriginal people. At least two people blatantly said that non-Aboriginal agencies are just not meeting the needs of Aboriginal women or Aboriginal people in general. Sarah Barsfai of STEP, a youth program in Kenora says Aboriginal people have a distinctive life style and think differently. June Bishop at Women's Place in Kenora, a women's shelter and resource centre states that there is a need to educate non-Aboriginal agencies about the discrimination suffered by Aboriginal People; unfortunately some being at the very hands of these social service workers.

A community response team could be something very effective in any Aboriginal community. With their plentiful transportation and communications facilities, urban areas provide fertile ground for such services. In the larger Canadian cities of Toronto, London, and Vancouver, there are Aboriginal community response teams and in Vancouver, the Native Education Centre has started the first training courses for the study of Native family violence. Entitled Native Family Violence and Community Service Training, this course offers intensive training in a culturally sensitive manner for students studying Aboriginal family violence and prevention thereof. Smaller Aboriginal communities also provide ample opportunity for the establishment of community response teams due to their small population and intimate atmosphere.

Virtually all organizations said there was a need for more Aboriginal services. The existing services are not adequate and for those presently in the field, the workload is very high. Only Debbie Steele at Clarissa Manor, a recovery home for women with alcohol problems in Kenora did not feel there was a need for more Aboriginal services. However, the other respondents mentioned a flotilla of services required right now for Aboriginal people. Programs are needed in the area of child care, child counseling, men's counseling, Elder support, mental health, life skills; more crisis and second stage housing are in order; there also needs to be more programs for urban and reserve residents, recognizing their unique needs. Over-riding the above mentioned necessities is the common theme that there has to be more Aboriginal people providing and administering these services.

(xi) Conclusion of Service Personnel

The surveys among the Aboriginal social workers and community care professionals re-enforces the survey conducted with Aboriginal women that there is a desperate need for more Aboriginally run family violence prevention services. Tragically, family violence and the results of it are something the service providers are all too familiar with; every person interviewed recognized that family violence is a major problem since they come into contact with it either directly through front line counseling and referrals or through people who have been touched by family violence in their past. Not only are there not enough services directed at Aboriginal women and family violence, those people in what services that are available are not adequately trained in dealing with crisis situations.

For effective means of dealing with the problem of family violence, solutions must come from the grass roots within Aboriginal communities. However, funds and services must be created to foster a climate where all participants can confront this issue and feel there is a system to support them. Above all, there must be more public awareness on this issue among adults and an education program aimed at children so that they realize what is happening. Women must be aware of their rights and the services available so that they can exercise these rights for themselves and their children. Key people within the community, such as Elders and community leaders must also take up this issue.

Education is also required for the non-Aboriginal communities as well. Centers of higher learning need to address this issue in providing more courses so that social workers can better handle the problems they are facing. The use of Elders and traditional counseling methods should be brought into universities and colleges to familiarize Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture. Education and cultural sensitization is also needed by police officers and Judges who should be providing effective sentencing with the aim of protecting the victims and reforming the abusers. More properly trained child care workers are especially required to deal with the issues of incest and child abuse.

In dealing with family violence, a holistic approach needs to be developed, one where all participants, victims, abusers and bystanders feel there is the hope for a change in their relationship. This holistic approach should be cognizant of the problems facing Aboriginal people with the aim of bolstering their identity and feeling of control. There must be recognition of the differences faced by those people living in urban settings who may feel alienated from the majority and those living in more isolated reserves who feel helpless in the face of their lack of collective self-control and massive unemployment. Services must be available, regardless of governmental status to all Aboriginal women and children.

PART V – SUMMARY ON ACCESS TO SERVICES AND THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM IN ONTARIO

From a reading of the two previous sections, it should be evident that Aboriginal women suffer excessive and unnecessary hardships in the context of family violence. The incidence of family violence is eight times higher than for the non-Aboriginal population, while our access to services, and legal protection, is reduced or impeded by factors very much beyond our control or design. This situation is one which requires dramatic and immediate government action. The present policies of the Provincial Government of Family Violence are, for the most part, inappropriate for our needs.

We need to develop Aboriginal responses to family violence which are culturally appropriate for us, which are designed by us and which are implemented and valued by us. There are some promising developments on the horizon. The establishment of a public awareness and education program by Tikinagan Child and Family Services, covering twenty-seven Northern Ontario communities is encouraging, as is their proposal to develop a therapeutic residential program for abusive men. In addition, the establishment of legal services at one shelter is a model which should be monitored and instituted at other shelter or "Healing Lodges". However, some of the Aboriginal proposals have been denied government support at an early stage which means they are limited in terms of long term efforts to reduce family violence. This must be reconsidered. For example, a project proposed by thirty-two First Nations communities in Ontario, under the direction of the Whitefish Lake First Nation Family Violence Committee and MANOTSAYWIN NANOTOJIG, which sought to assess the needs of First Nations citizens in Ontario in the family violence area and identify how these needs can be met, was rejected last year.

It is clear to us that complete solutions to the Aboriginal family violence situation will only be possible alongside new political or constitutional arrangements for self-government. It is essential that programs be developed by us, in our communities, and administered by us, in order to be successful. This is the underlying problem which complicates Aboriginal family violence without real control over our lives; we cannot begin to meet the needs of those who suffer from family violence. The situation of Aboriginal women in family violence situations is a dire one. When considered against the related background of social and economic status, Aboriginal women have to design solutions and take the initiative in order to break the cycle of violence which is so entrenched in our communities.

PART VI – THE PROPOSAL FOR ACTION

This section of our Report on Aboriginal Family Violence details our proposals for action. The proposed action is highlighted in numbered paragraphs, with a discussion of the necessity for the proposed course of action underneath each numbered proposal. The proposals have been arranged in a more or less definite order from the general proposals for change, to the more specific proposals on legal issues, medical issues, social services, and education etc. The proposals are not termed recommendations because we see them as more than recommendations. They reflect what we believe are urgent needs which must be responded to in order to meet the extreme levels of Aboriginal family violence in Ontario.

These are the proposals for action on family violence that we, as Aboriginal women, believe is required. The focus of the proposals is not on what the government or non-Aboriginal society can do to help the situation of family violence in Aboriginal communities, although certainly, the Provincial Government does have a role to play. We want to develop holistic solutions to family violence which represent our cultural values and practices, and which are community based. Consequently, the focus is on what we want to do in our communities to strengthen families and to heal the scars of family abuse. Of course, we need the financial support of government to undertake many of the proposals which follow but we do not need more regulation or involvement by government or by bureaucrats in our communities. Moreover, each of these proposals has also been put forth by our organization in order to foster discussions with other Aboriginal organizations, such as bands and tribal councils, so that jointly we can reach final solutions to the high levels of Aboriginal family violence.

One important feature of our proposals for action, which we should stress, is that underlying all our solutions must, be an honoring of the four directions (honesty, kindness, sharing and strength). We want to work toward each of these four directions in our solutions to family violence; we do believe that solutions will be possible unless each of these is respected and honored in our communities, and in our approaches to social problems like family violence. The necessity of this underlying approach was reflected in the responses to one question in our questionnaire, to which respondents suggested that Elders must be involved in helping people who experience family violence, 53%; further, social service agencies at 65%; community leaders, 62%; and all community members 32%.

When asked to list four services which they thought would be of help to families in their community experiencing family violence, the Aboriginal women who responded to our questionnaire listed the following, in order of frequency:

- Counseling for victim/batterer/children/family members
- Crisis homes for victims designed and run by Aboriginal peoples
- Community education
- Financial assistance
- Family violence social service agency
- Community based self help groups for victim/batterers
- Effective laws and policing
- More housing
- Community response team
- Transportation out of the community
- Jobs
- Medical services, especially a doctor
- Alcohol and drug abuse assistance
- Assistance from the church/counseling

We have attempted to incorporate these suggestions into our proposals below. It is noteworthy that in terms of prevention of family violence, as opposed to treatment of the effects of violence, the respondents to our questionnaire suggested, as their first priority, community workshops and support group sessions; as their second suggestion, general community awareness projects; and as their third suggestion, alcohol and drug treatment. These ideas have also been incorporated into our proposals for action.

As we stressed in the introduction to this report, the underlying factor in family violence, and other social problems in Aboriginal communities, is the legal and political structure which has forbidden us to govern ourselves according to our value system and the involvement of a foreign bureaucracy in every aspect of our lives. The most far reaching development, in the context of family violence, would be the recognition and implementation of self-government arrangements for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal child welfare agencies, social services organizations and a justice system are concrete examples of self-government which would enable us to have the full scope and jurisdiction to address the many aspects of family violence, according to our vision of the family and community. Thus the Provincial and Federal Government must recognize and support the implementation of the inherent right of Aboriginal people to self-determination.

1. The Provincial and Federal Governments must ensure that a policy of equality of access in the provision of services and financial resources be continually adhered to for all Aboriginal women regardless of residence or status.

Far too often in Canadian history, divisions have been created between First Nations and Metis over such issues as status, residency and gender with the end result being that Aboriginal women are left without the support of any level of government and at odds with their own people. Until the development of a self-governing structure where all Aboriginal people would be treated equally, no Aboriginal women or their organizations should be denied a certain service, financial support or legal protection because of the status forced upon her by the Canadian Government.

2. A special network of at least twelve 'Healing Lodges' should be established in or near Aboriginal communities which can provide shelter, support and healing for the battered woman and her children based on a model which reflects an Aboriginal vision of women, children the family and with services available in Aboriginal languages.

Because services are needed specifically for Aboriginal women both due to culturally unique needs and the geographical location of Aboriginal women, these needs are not being met by existing services, a network of shelter or 'Healing Lodges' specifically for Aboriginal people is required. The 'Healing Lodges' must be organized around an Aboriginal model which emphasized the role of women in Aboriginal life, the spiritual needs of the battered woman, the physical need of medical treatment or alcohol treatment (including education on dealing with alcoholism and the alcoholic). There are some models available, such as Kashee's Place set up by the Yukon Indian Women's Association in Whitehorse.

The immediate need is for at least twelve 'Healing Lodges'. We would recommend three healing lodges be established in each of the four regions of the province (as we have divided up the province according to the breakdown of our local affiliates). These must be organized and run by Aboriginal people – preferable from the Nation whose citizens would most use the service. All services in the Lodges must be available in Aboriginal languages, as well as English, so as to allow women to feel safe, comfortable to discuss their violent home and able to begin a healing and rejuvenation process.

However, more work is clearly required in developing an appropriate model and testing it in a community to understand more fully the needs of the abuse women and children. As a beginning, funding should be made available to the Ontario Native Women's Association to help facilitate an organizational model for one 'Healing Lodge' in co-operation with service providers who see Aboriginal family violence on the front lines. This planning body could identify the needs, find out what resources (both human and financial) are available, and then formalize a model which in turn would be used as a pilot project to determine the successfulness of the approach and to perfect the model to the needs of Aboriginal communities. The Healing Lodge should work closely with Elders and Aboriginal professionals (medical, social work, psychiatric) to begin to strengthen women and children so they can return to the community, or resume their life in the community, without being ashamed, alienated, or stigmatized for being abused. There should be one such pilot project in each of O.N.W.A.'s four divisions with each one having a separate mandate to address the special needs of Aboriginal women, be they for First nation women on a reserve, in a Metis community, in an urban setting or in an isolated community.

The Healing Lodges could also be responsible for ongoing community education, institutional and professional support for the establishment of self help groups for victims, batterers, and other family members. Moreover, legal services must be provided from the

Healing Lodges on a similar model to those provide now at the Anduhyuan emergency shelter and residence for Aboriginal women in Toronto.

3. An Aboriginal treatment program for male batterers, such as the model proposed by Tikinagan Child and Family Services, must be instituted across the province. It must be designed and staffed by Aboriginal persons, drawing heavily on the resources of Elders and the most respected members of the community who can assist Aboriginal men in overcoming their anger, frustration, and destructive behavior towards their families.

We are firmly committed, and believe it is fundamental for long term solutions, to address the problems with which Aboriginal men struggle which lead them to family abuse. We see men as victims of the system generally, who take their frustrations out on their loved ones and need to be strengthened and restored to their place with their Nation. This is not meant to be interpreted as condoning family violence or rejecting personal responsibility. Far from it; any treatment program is based upon making the individual accountable for his actions. Treatment programs must also be able to address a problem very intimately related to family violence in Aboriginal society, that is, alcohol, drug or solvent abuse. These two problems seem to go hand-in-hand, and solutions to family violence are likely impossible without a dual approach. The involvement of Elders and spiritual leaders in this aspect of family violence is critical, because only Elders and leaders who are respected in the community, and respected by Aboriginal men, will be able to get through to men to help begin their process of healing.

We must utilize our value system; and our rituals in healing the male batterer. Sweet grass, tobacco, and other sacred elements of healing must be incorporated into the process of treatment of male batterers. This is impossible without the development of Aboriginal treatment programs. This work should be generously funded and supported by all levels of government because it is obviously a critical component of the overall solution to Aboriginal family violence.

4. In developing solutions to Aboriginal family violence, it is essential to provide culturally appropriate services to children and to attempt to keep the children united with at least one parent, or relatives of the child, in the setting from which they came.

We are deeply concerned about the needs of Aboriginal children who are exposed to violence between their parents or suffer any kind of abuse themselves. They feel insecure, and often blame themselves for the violence. Removing them from the home, or from a parent, only reinforces this false self-blame. It is important that children stay within the community during a family breakdown. They need to be healed, re-strengthened, and to know that they were not to blame for the family violence, and that everything is working towards a healthy family based on Aboriginal values. Non-Aboriginal service workers who have jurisdiction over Aboriginal children should be informed of the needs of Aboriginal children, and the inappropriateness of removing them from the community. This could be done through sensitization training of social service workers and a province wide bulletin or policy-circular which suggests what involvement is legitimate in these cases.

There needs to be respite care for children as well as for the parents involved in family violence. This could be done through Aboriginal leadership camps and wilderness experiences with the aid of Elders and Aboriginal professionals. The purpose of these healing sessions would be to build self-esteem, personal stability and remove the sense of guilt which arises from family violence situations. They could provide counseling and education to children concerning the reasons for family violence, how to recognize it and how to stop it. Family camps are the ultimate extension of this idea where the whole family would seek healing and reunion to a better living relationship.

5. The level of services required in Aboriginal communities to treat and combat the abuse of alcohol. Drugs, and solvents, must be immediately increased in order to address a problem intimately connected to the high incidence of family violence. Support must be made available for the expansion of existing services for batterers and victims, from the young to the old, to promote a holistic approach to Aboriginal family violence.

In light of the close connection between the problems of alcoholism and family violence (94% of the respondents to our questionnaire indicated that alcohol was a factor at some point in family violence disputes) it is essential that this facet of the problem be addressed in a more effective manner than at present. Once again, it would be helpful if the network of Healing

Lodges include services for the rehabilitation of alcohol, drug, and solvent abusers in a fashion which is integrated with the other services provided to heal Aboriginal families.

6. A community response team, similar to that envisioned by the Tikinagan proposal must be instituted in every Ontario Aboriginal community, whether reserve, urban center, isolated community or rural area.

This is something which could be handled in all Aboriginal communities with a high degree of grass roots support. A crisis response team specifically trained on how to deal with family violence situations could be involved in a number of jobs. They would be resource individuals for community education, providing intervention for those actually experiencing violence in removing the abuser, group support individual counseling for victims and abusers, advocacy, support and information in legal matters and referrals.

Each community response team could be tailored to the community needs with a combination of paid and volunteer workers. These community response teams could also work in co-operation with existing facilities and proposed healing lodges. By using this method of community participation it could get more victims and abusers to recognize their situation and seek help without having to leave the community.

Individuals from this team could also stay with the abused women and children at their home for a period offering protection in case the abuser returns or just as support in trying to get the abused women and children adjusted to their new situation.

7. An immediate education program, based upon the findings in this needs assessment, should be developed for Aboriginal people by Ontario Native Women's Association. Its purpose would be to educate the communities on the causes and nature of violence, the needs of Aboriginal families, as well as encourage communities to take the initiative in starting up a healing lodge, batterer treatment program and community response teams. Just an importantly, there must be a separate element for the education program which is geared to children and which is brought into the schools.

An education program, spearheaded by the Ontario Native Women's Association, must be undertaken in every community with an Aboriginal population. Our recent project did perform the function of an education program, although we primarily reached Aboriginal women. A standard workshop format using guest speakers who have experience family violence must be established and brought to every Aboriginal community. An overall education program must reach all members of the community, utilizing various media such as videos, dramas, commercials, posters, pamphlets, etc. in order to raise community awareness about the unacceptability of family violence. Aboriginal people, especially women and children must be informed; of their rights, the legal avenues open to them, what resources are available, where then can receive community and financial support, as well as sheltering and other options open to them.

This is an immediate need, which could be started by the Ontario Native Women's Association, along with other interested organizations or band councils in the province and it must be fully supported by the Provincial Government. It is essential to raise awareness and to encourage community based solutions through education and the production of community resources on Aboriginal family violence. One significant goal or community education would be to encourage, as a minimum community activity, the establishment of a support group for victims of family violence who could begin to work locally to strengthen the abused women without leaving the place she lives.

Moreover, education aimed at children, as a part of the overall family education proposal, must be undertaken to reinforce to the children of violent families that they are not to blame for what happens at home, and that they are loved and respected by their families and communities. Elders, Aboriginal leaders and professionals should be used in school programs along with counselors to aid children in confronting the issue and in trying to break the cycle of family violence. The education program for children could also be provided through the proposed Healing Lodges or any other community agency which deals with family violence. Funding should also be made available to make sure these education programs are adequately serving Aboriginal people.

8. The province should vigorously support the creation of an Aboriginal justice system, which can more readily address the Aboriginal people. Full support should also be given to setting up Aboriginal peace keepers in our communities, based on a culturally appropriate model, and with the development of an Aboriginal justice system, fully involving Elders and community leaders, and to address the problem of family violence. Until such time as an Aboriginal justice system is in place, it is necessary to continue to involve Canadian law enforcers in Aboriginal family disputes in order to prevent an escalation of violence and increased harm to family violence. It is not enough to lay Canadian criminal charges against Aboriginal male batterers and incarcerate them because this will only fuel the vicious cycle of violence brought on by the frustration and difficulty of life under the administration of the Canadian Government and criminal justice system. When charging is used against the batterer, counseling and treatment in a culturally sensitive manner must be mandatory so the individual can be healed.

We cannot over emphasize the need for an Aboriginal criminal justice system to deal with, among other matters, the problem of family violence. The Canadian criminal justice system has no sense of authority in Aboriginal society, it is not fully respected, and the presence of non-Aboriginal police or judges encourages resistance and alienation. We need an Aboriginal system of justice which utilizes our vision of the community not to 'punish'

(because this is a foreign notion to us as it is imagined in Canadian society) but to direct and guide citizens in a way which is meaningful. This proposal is fully in keeping with a recent Canadian Bar Association study advocating the development of an Aboriginal criminal justice system, and with the proposals put forward over the past several years by the Ontario Native Council on Justice.

However, it is advisable, in the short term that cultural awareness workshops are offered to all Canadian law-enforcers who participate in work in Aboriginal communities, or in an urban centre with a significant Aboriginal population. Better communication is essential between the police and Aboriginal people to remove some of the animosity which exists between them. To help achieve this, Aboriginal community involvement should be encouraged between local police officers and the Aboriginal community through workshops, information exchange sessions and the recruitment of many more Aboriginal officers. Aboriginal people, like all Canadians want to live in a crime free society and raise their children in an atmosphere without violence.

9. We propose the development of a training package for medical personnel (physicians and nurses) which will assist them in identifying cases of family violence and enable them to assist Aboriginal families in a culturally sensitive manner, while informing them of Aboriginal services to assist with emotional and spiritual healing of abused families.

There is a need to make the medical profession familiar with the needs of the battered Aboriginal woman, and her children, so that appropriate medical services can be provided to begin the healing process. A kit, which could be distributed to all hospital emergency departments, and medical offices, particularly in the North, would educate medical professionals of the symptoms of Aboriginal family violence. Instructing them on culturally sensitive ways to approach the problem with patients would be a significant beginning. The Ontario Native Women's Association could help in developing this kit, along with such organizations as the Indian and Inuit Nurses Association, and the Lakehead University Native Nursing Program for circulation in Ontario.

This package could also be sent to any other agency which sees the effects of Aboriginal family violence. Within universities and colleges, there is a need for more studies in the field of family violence and graduates should be instructed on both the nature of Aboriginal family violence and how to deal with it in a culturally sensitive manner. Aboriginal Elders and leaders could become good resource people and positive role models for higher education institutions in their efforts to train Aboriginal and on-Aboriginal social and community workers.

10. The degree of Aboriginal medical services available to Aboriginal families in violent situations must be increased, particularly in Northern and isolated communities. As the very minimum, every Aboriginal community, whether reserve, urban centers with a large Aboriginal community, or Metis area must have one Aboriginal nurse which speaks

an Aboriginal language, and additionally one doctor, preferable Aboriginal, who is trained in family violence identification and medical and psychiatric treatment for the victim and batterer.

There is an overwhelming need for Aboriginal medical personnel to be available in communities, and to be trained to identify and respond to family violence. It is not acceptable for Aboriginal women and children to leave the community to receive assistance in times of emergencies. Moreover, to prevent the escalation of violence, and to prevent more serious abuse and possible death, Aboriginal medical personnel must be trained to identify the systems of family violence and address these at an early stage, to ensure that greater damage and harm is not caused to the family, and in turn, to the community.

11. For Aboriginal women living on reserves, matrimonial property standards should be developed to enable an abused woman to gain the interim possession of the matrimonial home, until such time as the batterer can be treated and the family can be restored to a healthy and safe environment for the women and children. Until such proper self-government arrangements are in place, band councils should be encouraged to develop a by-law providing Aboriginal women with protection so that she can remain in the community. For First Nations and Metis women who do not live on reserves, there should be an evaluation of the Ontario Family Law Reform Act as it relates to matrimonial property for them.

The situation of Aboriginal women living on reserves in the context of matrimonial property is an unequal and very harmful one. As illustrated in this Report, most frequently, women will be forced to leave the reserve and to seek shelter in an urban centre, with no legal protection of her interest in the matrimonial home. She will then look like the one who abandoned her home, and her community, simply because she has no where else to go, and no protection to remain in her home and community. Specific recommendations from another study of this situation have been appended and should also be carefully considered. An investigation should also be made of how the Ontario Family Law Reform Act is working in practice and how many of those women experiencing family violence off reserve receive the matrimonial property.

The Ontario Native Women's Association supports the interim development of a model by-law which band councils can adopt in order to provide protection to women who are being abused and have no where to go. Such a model by-law could be developed by us and circulated in booklet form, with explanatory notes, to all bands and tribal councils in Ontario immediately. An information package should also be developed for Metis, non-Status and Status Indian women living off reserve as to how the Ontario Family Law Reform Act affects them and how to use it to their best advantage. The support of the Province of Ontario is crucial to enable us to undertake this important interim measure.

12. A clearinghouse or organizational centre specifically on Aboriginal family violence should be developed in order to encourage the continuance of research and needs assessment in this area, and the development of models for safe homes, or 'Healing Lodges', treatment programs, and other community based solutions to Aboriginal family violence.

One central clearinghouse on Aboriginal family violence is needed in order to assist communities and individuals working in the area. The Ontario Native Women's Association is willing to operate as a clearinghouse since we feel we have begun to develop one in the course of our six month project on Aboriginal family violence. However, more funding and structural support is required in order to set up an operational, staffed, clearinghouse on Aboriginal family violence. In the future, it would be helpful if a short newsletter on Aboriginal family violence could be started and circulated to all Aboriginal communities and organizations in the Province informing them of current research, community initiatives, and other news on the status of family violence solutions for Aboriginal Peoples.

13. It is necessary that a toll-free telephone service be set up specifically for victims of Aboriginal family violence. The service could provide information about local shelters, medical and legal professionals in all communities, and support groups for victims and children which callers would be able to access. This service could be operated out of the clearinghouse on Aboriginal family violence, and the number could be made available as part of the wider community education program on family violence.

Most women we interviewed, or who completed the questionnaire we circulated had, as a minimum, access to a telephone in their community. In many cases, this was the extent of their connection with the outside. Because this is one of the few common resources available to the Aboriginal victim of family violence, it should be utilized to assist and inform her. Unfortunately, the current level of services which an Aboriginal woman could be referred to is tragically sparse. However, at least she could provide her with contacts in non-Aboriginal services, until such time as the network of Healing Lodges are in place and a full Aboriginal referral agency could be instituted.

The Ontario Native Women's Association will offer support services to an Aboriginal Healing Lodge or crisis shelter that could be responsible for the operation of the toll-free line in conjunction with the operation of the clearinghouse on Aboriginal family violence. Funding would be required to operate this service. It would be essential that, for example, in addition to the phone service, a wallet-sized card be developed with the toll-free number on it, which would be distributed through the local affiliates of the Ontario Native Women's Association, in order to inform women in all communities of the availability of this service. One central phone service would be a definite encouragement to Aboriginal women who are fearful of seeking help and unaware of what is available. She would be less inhibited about speaking to another Aboriginal woman about her situation and the possibilities for change, and who, ideally, would speak one Aboriginal language.

PART VII – CONCLUSION

Urgent action is required to address the needs of Aboriginal women and children in the area of family violence. Our recent family violence project has revealed further evidence that the level and severity of family violence in Aboriginal communities is epidemic. We have outlined a detailed Proposal for Action which we hope will form the basis of immediate changes to meet our unique situation. We welcome your ideas on our proposals, and your co-operation and commitment to accomplishing them.

The level of services for the battered First Nation or Metis woman in Ontario is far from adequate or culturally appropriate to our needs. There are virtually no unique services, no legal rights to property, and no programs in place for the rehabilitation or healing of the batterer of the family. Our needs are unique ones; they cannot be met by general services for battered women in the province. We want to focus future changes on the re-strengthening of the family, because this is the only effectual course of action. We do not want to be forever subjecting Aboriginal men to criminal charges under the Canadian Criminal Code. We would like to design Aboriginal responses, using Aboriginal peace keepers and Elders, to intervene in violent homes in a way which respects our values and cultural practices as First Nations and Metis Peoples.

Our organization, the Ontario Native Women's Association, has a very definite role to play in the development of the proposals outlined in this Report. We want to act as facilitators by providing models for Lodges, batterer rehabilitation programs, and community laws which can be put into action. We want to operate a clearinghouse on Aboriginal women and family violence which can also monitor the implementation of new methods of meeting the needs of Aboriginal families. Moreover, we want to play a leadership role in sending out a message to Aboriginal communities, and to non-Aboriginal persons in the province of Ontario, that family violence is a weakening of our Nations because it is a weakening of our families. One point which struck us during our Project was that there are many other Aboriginal organizations, band councils and tribal councils who also have a great commitment to addressing family violence. Holistic solutions to Aboriginal family violence will only be possible with the full consultation, discussion, and collective involvement of all Aboriginal organizations in the province of Ontario. Even this could be made possible through the operation of a fully supported clearinghouse which could coordinate joint action on Aboriginal family violence.

The situation of Aboriginal women in violent homes has been studied and analyzed enough. We all know what the problems are, what the causes are, and especially what the needs are. We do not need further study and investigation of the problem: We need urgent action. We need to implement the proposals outlined in this Report. We need considerable Government support to make these proposals a reality. However, the problem is clear, and the responsibility is obvious. The human rights situation of Aboriginal women in violent homes, particularly those who live on a reserve and have no legal interest in their matrimonial homes, is unacceptable under Canadian law, and arguable under International law. Aboriginal women are forced to leave their homes and their communities in search of protection for themselves and their children. This cuts women off from their communities, from their culture, their language, and their extended family.

The Ontario Native Women's Association is committed to ending this situation, and to meeting the needs of Aboriginal families in violent times.

ENDNOTES

1. We use the term "Aboriginal" because it is constitutionally recognized as an academically defined term; it refers to Metis and First Nations the way "European" denotes those who live in Europe, whether French, German, Yugoslavian etc., Mohawk, Ojibway, Cree, etc.
2. The term Aboriginal community which is used throughout the report is meant to have a very broad interpretation. It denotes a cohesive group of Aboriginal people living in a geographic area. It encompasses Status, non-Status Indians, Metis, and those Aboriginal people living on reserves and in isolated communities. Since its inception, the Ontario Native Women's Association has fought for equality amongst all Aboriginal women in face of discriminatory governmental legislation (i.e. The Indian Act) and for the right of Metis and First Nation women to determine their own identity.
3. For those interested in other positions taken by the organization, The Ontario Native Women's Association position paper on the 1985 amendments to the Indian Act is available upon request.
4. The Exploratory Research Report prepared by the Ontario Native Women's Association in 1980, is the background document to: Ontario Native Women...A Perspective. Ontario Native Women's Association, Thunder Bay: Guide Printing & Publishing 1980.
5. This report was written by Linda McLeod for the Canadian Advisory Council. In particular she refers to the isolation of Aboriginal women on reserves because she suggests that "reserves that have their own policing systems are usually under the jurisdiction of a regional council which is responsible for social welfare. As a result, reserve women rarely have access to outside social and health services." The difficulty with these statements is that very few reserves actually have their own peace-keepers or policing systems under their own jurisdiction. They may have by-law enforcers, but nothing akin to their own police force. Furthermore, few are under the jurisdiction of an Aboriginal social services agency which genuinely has authority over health and social services.
6. The Indian Act regulates the lives of Aboriginal persons who fall within its definition of Indian from birth to death, covering everything from registrations to estates. By implication, it regulates those who do not fall within its definition because it determines what they are not entitled to. In fact it splits the First Nations into Status and non-Status Indians and totally neglects the Metis, divides families and has caused untold pain on Aboriginal people. The fact is that our women and members of their own families are divided. Those living under the Federal jurisdiction and others who are a part of the Provincial scope of powers are just another testimony to the divisions we face and the problems they cause in relation to service delivery.
7. A sample questionnaire is in the Sources of this Report.
8. Professor C. Nelson of Lakehead University, Thunder Bay reviewed the questionnaire and offered comments which were incorporated.
9. See the Sources of this Report for map of local affiliates of the Ontario Native Women's Association.
10. As contrasted with 48% of the reserve (New Credit Indian Reserve) sample, which combined was a response indicating that the level of family violence was approximately 63%.

11. As noted above, Riddell and Doxtator's study of Aboriginal Family Violence in London, Ontario (1986) indicated that 71% of the urban respondents have personal experience with family violence. Furthermore, a Nova Scotia Native Women's Association survey of 300 Micmac women in 1985 indicated that 70% of the married respondents have been victimized by their husbands.
12. McLeod, Linda. Wife Battering in Canada: A Vicious Circle. Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1980.
13. The Riddell-Doxtator study of family violence in London Ontario suggested that only 27% of the urban sample and 21% of the (New Credit Indian Reserve) sample have ever utilized any of the services locally available to battered women.
14. The study referred to above, conducted by the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association.
15. This was the conclusion of Jane Riddell and Pauline Doxtator in the Native Women's Needs Assessment Survey, Urban and Oneida Reserve Population. London, Ontario: Women's Education and Research Foundation, 1986, and an expert opinion study by Jamieson, entitled Aboriginal Male Violence Against Aboriginal Women in Canada, published 1987.
16. Wanda Jamieson, Aboriginal Male Violence Against Aboriginal Women in Canada, submitted to the Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Ottawa, Ontario, May 1987.
17. Ibid.
18. See the Proposal submitted by Tikinagan Child and Family Services, February 9, 1988 in Sources to This Report.
19. Ibid., p.9
20. Similar treatment programs have been established in the United States with overwhelming success. See, for instance, the Native Family Violence Program, First Step Program, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
21. Under the new Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1987, Indian bands can apply for their own research monies to undertake studies and needs assessments in relation to Aboriginal children.
22. From remarks of Hon. Ian Scott, Family Violence News Conference, April 15, 1987.
23. From "Family Violence: The Provincial Approach" circulated at the news conference referred to above.
24. See "Lets Break the Silence" brochure produced and circulated by the Ontario Women's Directorate, 1988.
25. Ibid.
26. The operative sections of the Criminal Codes are sections 244 to 246.8. Section 246.8 ensures that spouses can be charged with assault by providing the "(a) husband may be charged with an offence...in respect of his or her spouse whether or not the spouses were living together at the time of the activity which forms the subject matter of the offence occurred."

27. Of course, the most explicit example of this was the attempt to assimilate Indian women through the former section 12 (1)(b) of the Indian Act, the effects of which, in spite of recent amendment to the Indian Act, continue to plague communities.

28. See the recent report submitted to the Canadian Bar Association, Locking up Natives in Canada, prepared by the Association's Special Committee on Imprisonment and Release, August 1988.

29. Ibid., See ' Separate system of justice backed for Native groups ', Globe and Mail, August 22, 1988, p.l.

30. The Riddell-Doxtator study of services for Aboriginal women experiencing family violence suggested that " it would also appear from the evidence that the policing of the reserves is woefully inadequate when it comes to responding to situations involving domestic violence...Long response time (in some cases more than an hour), not showing up at all and lack of effective intervention upon arrival...all contribute to the belief that many of the women has that 'the police won't help'" (p.23).

31. This was set up in the fall of 1972. The legal services are provided by law students from Osgoode Hall Law School.

32. Report submitted to the Ontario Women's Directorate, March 1988. There has been no response to this report to date.

33. Derrickson v. Derrickson, Paul v. Paul, (1986) S.C.R.1.; Ontario Family Law Reform Act, R.S.O. 1985, c.4.

34. It is noteworthy that in the British Columbia Court of Appeal, Mr. Justice Esson was of the view that " if there is an alternative source of protection (for Pauline Paul) it was not identified. Such a gap, if it exists, is no credit to our law. Such a consideration cannot make constitutional that which is clearly unconstitutional, but does provide a strong reason for interpreting the Federal and Provincial legislation, if possible, in a way that avoids conflict and the resultant gap." Unfortunately, there is no alternative to the gap which exists in legal protection for the Aboriginal women's interest in the matrimonial home.

35. Aboriginal women have been the brunt of the same kind of inequality in terms of Indian Status, which was upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Lavell and Bedard judgment in the 1970's.

36. Letter from the then Minister, Hon. David Crombie, to the President, Native Women's Association of Canada, June 7, 1986. By permission.

37. This proposal was submitted for consideration in February, 1988, although no funding has yet been made available..

38. MANOTSAYWIN NANOTOOJIG is the Committee for Native Action Against Family Violence. This proposal was submitted to the Native Community Branch of the Ministry of Community and Social Services in August 12, 1987. Unfortunately, the inter-Ministerial Committee on Family Violence rejected the proposal because of "prior approval given to a similar new project by the Ontario Native Women's Association." Evidently, the committee does not recognize the importance of Aboriginal projects operating on many levels to combat family violence, and the need for encouragement of all initiatives.

39. A Report submitted by Nicholson Consultants to the Ontario Women's Directorate, in May 1987, Economic Status of Native Women in Ontario suggests that "the general trend for Native women to experience higher levels of unemployment or underemployment is not

simply a reflection of any biases in the distribution of Native women from one industry to another. Rather, it is evident in all industry sections, as in all major occupational groups. This likely reflects a variety of factor, including overt and/or systemic discrimination on the combined bases of gender and aboriginal identity. It also reflects additional factors such as lower levels of educational attainment, poorer access to full-time and stable work situations, inadequate conditions in areas where Native populations are most highly concentrated...” (p.33).

40. The situation is arguably very similar to the Sandra Lovelace case. The United Nations Human Rights Committee found that Canada had violated several of its international human rights law obligations. The effect of Sandra’s loss of Indian Status was the denial of the right to practice her culture in communion with other members of the Tobique Indian Band. Women who are forced to leave the reserve because of family violence and have no legal interest in their matrimonial homes, are in a situation very similar to Sandra Lovelace.

APPENDIXES

1. Sample Questionnaire on Aboriginal Family Violence.....	46
2. Geographic Breakdown of Ontario Native Women’s Association’s Membership	51
3, Sample Interview Form Utilized by Project Staff	52
4. Agencies Interviewed for the Family Violence Study	64
5. Recommendations from “Aboriginal Family Violence and Matrimonial Property Standards on Indian Reserves” Report	67
6. Summary of the Tikinagan Child and Family Service’s “ Therapeutic Residential Treatment Program for Men “	68

INTERVIEW FORMAT NATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

QUESTIONS CONCERNING DEFINITIONS

- When we speak of family, what does this mean to you?
- For Native people does this mean only those people living in a household?
- Does the matter of Native Family Violence extend to all those related by blood?
- Should a study focus on Native Women?
- When we speak of a holistic approach what does this mean to you?
- What does a culturally appropriate response mean for Native People?
- When we speak of violence in a family situation what does this mean to you?
Does it include sexual abuse and child neglect?

QUESTIONS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

- What is your position with this agency?
- How long have you been employed here?
- What is your education and training?
- Have you had any specific training on family violence?
- Have you attended workshops on family violence?
- Do you think that it is important to be made aware of the family violence issue?
- Do you think that you or any of your staff require any training in the area of family violence?
- Do you think that it is important to deal with Native family violence matters in a culturally appropriate manner?
- Do you think that alcohol is a factor in most Native family violence situations?
- Do you think that alcohol causes family violence?
- Do you think that treatment for alcoholism will significantly reduce the family violence problem for Native people?
- Do you think that family violence is a big problem among Native people?
- Do you think that the urban Native family violence differs from the rural and remote experience? Consider factors creating solutions.
- Do you think that the rural and remote issues should be handled in a different manner from the urban issue? Consider reserves.
- Who should programs be directed at? Native family violence.
- Do you think that there is a need for a program or programs for Native men who are abusive to family members?
- Do you have any suggestions on long term strategies?
- Have you had personal experiences with family violence that you are willing to talk about?
- Do you have any knowledge of family violence other than spousal assault for Native people?
- Do you have any knowledge of wife abuse in Native communities? Incest?

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE CONTACT AGENCY

- How is your agency directed? Do you have a Board of Directors?
- How long has this agency been operating?
- Is your agency a service agency? To the general public? To the Native community?
- Does your agency have a good working relationship with the other Native service agencies in your community? A need for improvement?
- Does your agency keep statistics on Native People?
- What percentage of your Native clients specify or indicate a family violence problem? Estimate.
- Do you have a mandate?
- What are your organizational objectives?
- What area do you service?
- How are you funded?
- How many people are employed here? What are their positions?
- Do any of these workers deal with the issue of family violence? Directly? Indirectly?
- How is family violence an issue with your agency?
- How do you deal with an individual who indicates a family violence problem? A woman for instance asking for help.
- Does your agency require more training on the issue of family violence?
- Do you think that this issue of Native family violence is a closet issue? Not many want to talk about it.
- What do you think can or should be done to enable researchers to examine this more closely?

QUESTIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC EDUCATION

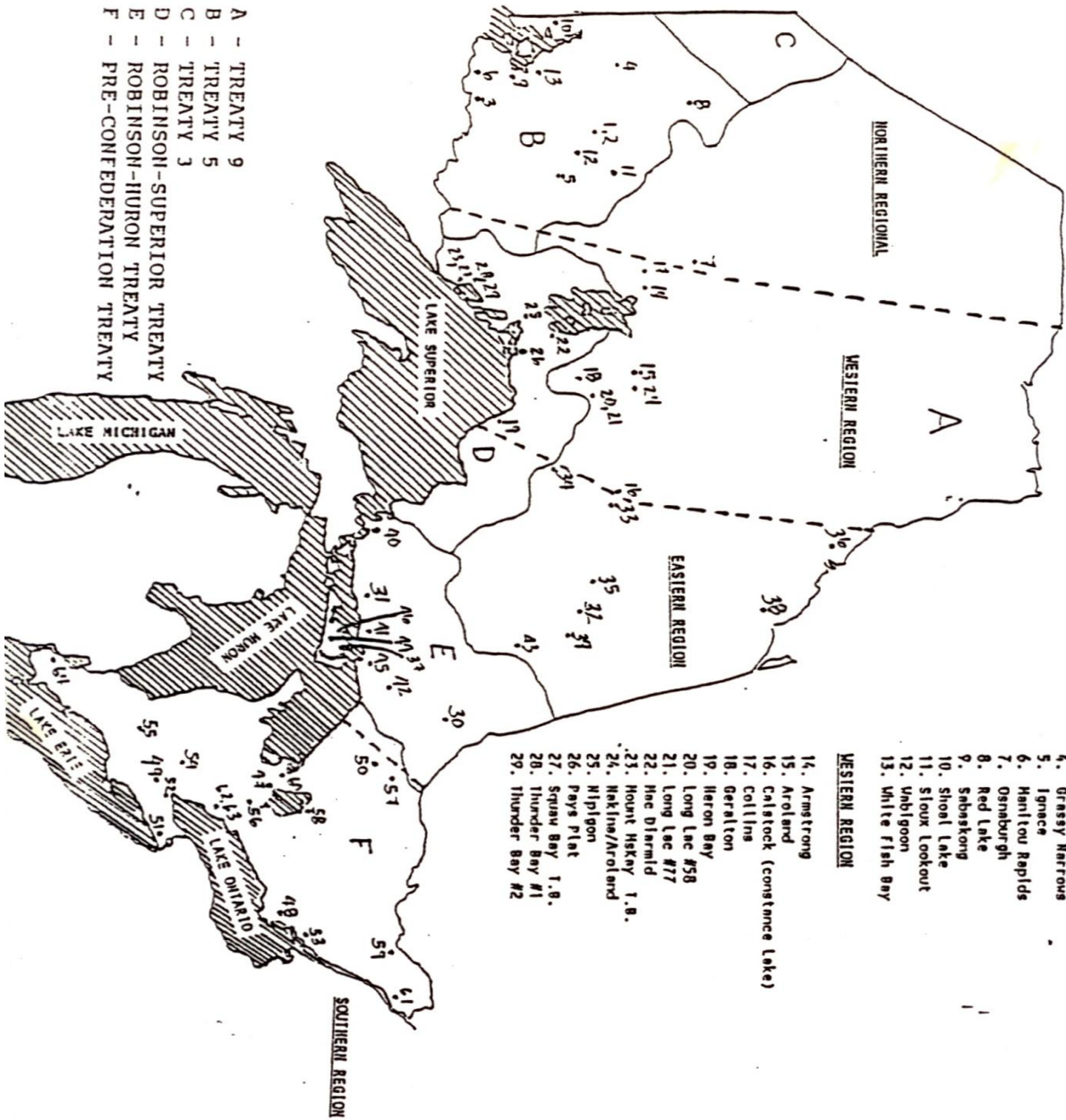
- Do you think that it is important to educate Native People on family violence?
- Do you think that family violence has become acceptable in many communities?
- What would be the best method for educating Native People?
- Who should a public education effort be directed at? Largest group.
- Is there a need to educate the non-Native agencies?
- Is there a need for increased services for Native People? What kind of services?
- Do you think that the existing services are adequate?

QUESTIONS CONCERNING RESOURCES

- Do you have any material which may help us in our research?
- Do you know of anyone who we could contact who would know more about family violence or Native family violence?
- Do you have any knowledge of programs for Native People on family violence?
- Do you know of any effective strategies for dealing with Native People?
- Do you know of anyone who would be willing to act as a facilitator?
- What do you think of resource sharing and networking?
- Do you have a computer system now? Will you in the near future? What do you think about computer networking systems?

MAP OF THE ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION'S REGIONAL & LOCAL MEMBERSHIPS

ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION'S
REGIONAL & LOCAL MEMBERSHIPS



- A - TREATY 9
- B - TREATY 5
- C - TREATY 3
- D - ROBINSON-SUPERIOR TREATY
- E - ROBINSON-HURON TREATY
- F - PRE-CONFEDERATION TREATY

NORTHERN REGION

- 1. Dryden
- 2. Aboriginat Women's Resource Centre
- 3. Hee-Chee Equunag
- 4. Fort Frances
- 5. Grassy Narrows
- 6. Ignace
- 7. Hamletou Rapids
- 8. Osunburgh
- 9. Red Lake
- 10. Snabstong
- 11. Shoal Lake
- 12. Sioux Lookout
- 13. Unbigoon
- 14. White fish Bay

WESTERN REGION

- 14. Armstrong
- 15. Arroland
- 16. Calstock (constance lake)
- 17. Collins
- 18. Gerralton
- 19. Heron Bay
- 20. Long Lac #58
- 21. Long Lac #77
- 22. Lac Orlamid
- 23. Mount Hekey 1.B.
- 24. Neklins/Arroland
- 25. Nipigon
- 26. Pays Plat
- 27. Squaw Bay 1.B.
- 28. Thunder Bay #1
- 29. Thunder Bay #2

EASTERN REGION

- 30. Bear Island
- 31. Blind River
- 32. Cochrane
- 33. Hearst
- 34. Horne Payne
- 35. Kenoskating
- 36. Kaschewen
- 37. Little Current
- 38. Hoosonee
- 39. New Post
- 40. Sault Ste. Marie
- 41. Spanish River
- 42. Sudbury
- 43. Timmins
- 44. West Bay (Two Bears)
- 45. Whitefish
- 46. Hamletouln

SOUTHERN REGION

- 47. Barrie
- 48. Bay of Quinte
- 49. Brantford (Oshuekan)
- 50. Doka 1.B.
- 51. Fort Erie
- 52. Hamilton
- 53. Kingston
- 54. Kitchener
- 55. London
- 56. New Market
- 57. North Bay
- 58. Orillia (Rennu)
- 59. Ottawa
- 60. Port Heckleoll
- 61. St. Regis (Cornwall)
- 62. Toronto #1
- 63. Toronto #2
- 64. Windsor

**ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
NATIVE FAMILY VIOLENCE
RESEARCH AND CO-ORINATION PROJECT**

QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire is one part of a Native family violence project being carried out by the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA). The purpose of this questionnaire is to assist ONWA in identifying community family violence needs and concerns. Your knowledge and co-operation is essential to the success of this research.

You need not identify yourself unless you want to. All individual questionnaires will be kept confidential, and only the final results of the research findings as a whole will be made available for discussion.

If you would like a copy of the final research findings, please request a copy from ONWA's head office in Thunder Bay, or from your Local President after August 1988.

Please answer and return this questionnaire as soon as possible to either your local President or mail directly to:

ONWA Native Family Violence Project
c/o 278 Bay Street
Thunder Bay 'P'
Ontario
P7B 1R8

If you have any questions or comments about this questionnaire or research project please call us collect at (807) 623-2262 or (807) 623-9152.

Thank you for your time and assistance with this research.

Respectfully,

Phillip Edwards, Researcher
Native Family Violence
Research and C-ordination Project

For the purpose of this Questionnaire the following definitions are used.

Family Violence

- Is any violence occurring between 2 or more people of the same family, including Physical, Sexual and Mental/Emotional Violence.

Husband/Wife

- Includes common-law relationships.

Physical Abuse

- Is the use of physical force against another person.

Sexual Abuse

- Is when someone is forced to carry out or participate in a sexual act against their will.

Emotional/Mental

- Is when someone believes they are going to be hurt because of threats or gestures and it is when someone feels depressed, hopeless or even suicidal because another member of the family continues to put them down, and has convinced them that they are no good, useless, or always wrong.

Abused or Victim

- Is the person(s) at whom an act of violence (abuse) or threat of violence is directed.

Abuser

- Is the person who acts violently or threatens violence towards another person.

PUT A CIRCLE OR X TO INDICATE "YES", "NO" OR "DON'T KNOW." WHEN INDICATING "OTHER", PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OR AN EXAMPLE.

1. **How old are you?**
- | | | | |
|--------------|---|---------|---|
| Less than 20 | 1 | 20 – 30 | 2 |
| 30 – 40 | 3 | 40 – 50 | 4 |
| 50 – 60 | 5 | over 60 | 6 |
2. **Do you live:**
- | | | | |
|------------|---|--------------------|---|
| On reserve | 1 | Rural community | 2 |
| Urban city | 3 | Isolated community | 4 |
3. **What is the approximate population of your community?**
- | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Less than 500 | 1 | 500 to 2,000 | 2 |
| 2,000 to 10,000 | 3 | 10,000 to 100,000 | 4 |
| More than 100,000 | 5 | | |
4. **Approximately what percentage of your community is Native?**
- | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------|---|
| More than 90% | 1 | About ¾'s | 2 |
| About ½ | 3 | About ¼ | 4 |
| Less than 10% | 5 | Less than 1% | 6 |
5. **Do most of the people in your community have telephones to call for help if necessary?**
- | | | | |
|------|---|-----|---|
| Yes? | 1 | No? | 2 |
|------|---|-----|---|
6. **Do most of the families in your community have transportation to go and get help if necessary?**
- | | | | |
|------|---|-----|---|
| Yes? | 1 | No? | 2 |
|------|---|-----|---|
1. **Does family violence occur in your community?**
- | | | | | | |
|------|---|-----|---|-------------|---|
| Yes? | 1 | No? | 2 | Don't know? | 3 |
|------|---|-----|---|-------------|---|
2. **What kinds of violence occurs in your community?**
- | | | | |
|---------------------|------|-----|-------------|
| | Yes? | No? | Don't know? |
| a. Mental/Emotional | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. Physical | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. Sexual | 1 | 2 | 3 |
3. **Who is the most often abused?**
- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Husband | 1 |
| Wife | 2 |
| Children | 3 |
| Elders | 4 |
| Wife & Children | 5 |
| Children & Husband | 6 |
| Elders & Children | 7 |
| Relatives | 8 |
| Others | 9 |

4. Who is most often the abuser?

Husband	1
Wife	2
Children	3
Elders	4
Relatives	5
Others	6

5. Is there usually more than one family member being abused?

Yes?	1	No?	2	Don't Know	3
------	---	-----	---	------------	---

a. Husband	1
b. Wife	2
c. Children	3
d. Elders	4
e. Wife & Children	5
f. Children & Husband	6
g. Elders & Children	7
h. Relatives	8
i. Others	9

6. Is there more than one person abusing others in the family?

Yes?	1	No?	2	Don't Know	3
------	---	-----	---	------------	---

a. Husband	1
b. Wife	2
c. Children	3
d. Elders	4
e. Relatives	5
f. Others	6

7. When family violence occurs, do members of the family talk about it?

Yes?	1	No?	2	Don't Know	3
------	---	-----	---	------------	---

If yes, who do they talk to about it?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Parents	1	2	3
b. Relatives	1	2	3
c. Friends	1	2	3
d. Neighbors	1	2	3
e. Community Leaders	1	2	3
f. Service Providers	1	2	3
g. Police	1	2	3
h. Others	1	2	3

8. Is family violence “ Reported “ to anyone?

Yes?	1	No?	2	Don't Know?	3
------	---	-----	---	-------------	---

If yes, who is it that reports the violence?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Wife	1	2	3
b. Children	1	2	3
c. Husband	1	2	3
d. Relatives	1	2	3
e. Elders	1	2	3
f. Neighbors	1	2	3
g. Friends	1	2	3
h. Others	1	2	3

Who is the violence report to?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
i. Parents	1	2	3
j. Relatives	1	2	3
k. Friends	1	2	3
l. Neighbors	1	2	3
m. Community Leaders	1	2	3
n. Service Providers	1	2	3
o. Police	1	2	3
p. Others	1	2	3

9. What types of family violence has occurred in your community?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Pushing/slapping/hitting	1	2	3
b. Threats	1	2	3
c. Punching/kicking	1	2	3
d. Use of Weapons	1	2	3
e. Sexual Assault	1	2	3
f. Others	1	2	3

10. What types of injuries have victims of family violence suffered?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Bruises	1	2	3
b. Cuts/Bleeding	1	2	3
c. Broken Bones	1	2	3
d. Wounds	1	2	3
e. Mental/Emotional	1	2	3
f. Others	1	2	3

11. How many cases do you know where someone has required medical attention because of family violence?

12. Do you know of anyone who has required medical attention more than once because of family violence?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

13. Do you know of anyone who has been injured in a family violence situation and should have gone for medical attention, but did not?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

14. Do you know of any cases where someone died because of family violence?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

a. How many cases?

15. What prevents or discourages people from going for medical attention when they have been injured in a family violence situation?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know
a. Shame	1	2	3
b. Fear	1	2	3
c. Lack of Medical Services	1	2	3

16. How many Native families in your community do you think are affected by family violence?

Very few	1
Almost ¼	2
Almost ½	3
Almost ¾	4
Almost all	5

17. Approximately how many times in the past two weeks do you think family violence has occurred (among Native families) in your community?

None	1
Less than 5 times	2
Less than 10 times	3
Less than 15 times	4
Less than 20 times	5

18. Approximately how many families who have experienced Native family violence seek help?

Very few	1
Almost ¼	2
Almost ½	3
Almost ¾	4
Almost all	5

19. Which family member is most likely to seek help when violence occurs?

Husband	1
Wife	2
Children	3
Elder	4
Children & Wife	5
Children & Husband	6
Children & Elder	7
Other	8

20. Who are they most likely to turn to in the community for help?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Relatives	1	2	3
b. Friends	1	2	3
c. Neighbors	1	2	3
d. Community Leaders	1	2	3
e. Service Providers	1	2	3
f. Police	1	2	3
g. Parents	1	2	3
h. Others	1	2	3

20. Of the families experiencing family violence how may do you think:

	Few?	Some?	Most?	All?
a. Want help	1	2	3	4
b. Need help	1	2	3	4
c. Get help	1	2	3	4

22. Which of these Services/Resources People are available in your community to help families experiencing violence?

	Not Available	Available	Not Much	Some What	Most Helpful
A. Family Worker	1	2	1	2	3
B. Prevention Worker	1	2	1	2	3
C. Crisis Counselor	1	2	1	2	3
D. N.N.A.D.A.P.	1	2	1	2	3
E. CHR/Referral Clerk	1	2	1	2	3
F. Priest/Minister	1	2	1	2	3
G. Mental Health Worker	1	2	1	2	3
H. Chief	1	2	1	2	3
I. Band Councilor	1	2	1	2	3
J. Children's Aid Worker	1	2	1	2	3
K. Education Counselor	1	2	1	2	3
L. Community Worker	1	2	1	2	3
M. Police	1	2	1	2	3

23. About how many families stay together even though violence occurs?

A Few	1
Less than ½	2
About ½	3
Most	4
All	5

24. Of the families who have separated because of violence was it:

- a. Immediately after the violence began? 1
 1 to 2 years after the violence began? 2
 More than 3 years after the violence began? 3
 After the violence resulted in serious injury? 4
 After other members of the family started being abused? 5

b. Please identify which other family members seek help.

Wife	1
Husband	2
Children	3
Elder	4
Relative	5
Other	6

25. When a family separates because of violence, who usually leaves the home?

Wife	1
Husband	2
Children	3
Wife and Children	4
Children and Husband	5
Other	6

26. Is family violence usually reported to the Police?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

27. Do you think family violence should be reported to the Police?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

Why do you think family violence should (or should not) be reported to the Police?

	Yes?	No?
a. To stop abuse	1	2
b. To make an example	1	2
c. Because it is wrong	1	2
d. So the abuser is forced to seek help	1	2
e. Other	1	2

28. Do you think Police should charge the abuser?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

Why do you feel this?

	Yes?	No?
a. To stop the abuse	1	2
b. To make an example	1	2
c. Because it is wrong	1	2
d. So the abuser is forced to seek help	1	2
e. Because women will not lay the charges	1	2
f. Other	1	2

29. Who do you think family violence should be reported to?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Relatives	1	2	3
b. Friends	1	2	3
c. Elders	1	2	3
d. Community Members	1	2	3
e. Community Leaders	1	2	3
f. Service Providers	1	2	3
g. Police	1	2	3
h. Others	1	2	3

30. What do you think prevents or discourages people from reporting family violence to anyone?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Fear	1	2	3
b. Shame	1	2	3
c. Lack of support services	1	2	3
d. Lack of alternate housing	1	2	3
e. It won't help	1	2	3
f. Other	1	2	3

31. How often is alcohol involved with family violence?

Rarely	1
Occasionally	2
Often	3
Usually	4
Don't Know	5

32. Do you think alcohol is the main cause of family violence?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

33. What other thing contribute to or cause family violence?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Jealousy	1	2	3
b. No money	1	2	3
c. No job	1	2	3
d. Poor communication	1	2	3
e. Other family members	1	2	3
f. Depression	1	2	3
g. People don't know how to get along	1	2	3
h. Grew up with it at home	1	2	3
i. Other	1	2	3

34. Are other members of the family (besides the abuser and the abused) affected by the violence?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

a. Which other family members are being affected?

Husband	1
Wife	2
Children	3
Grandparents	4
Relatives	5
Children & Grandparents	6
Children & Relatives	7
Other	8

35. How are they affected?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Repeat what they see	1	2	3
b. Mental/emotional problems	1	2	3
c. Low self-esteem	1	2	3
d. Suicide	1	2	3
e. Physical abuse	1	2	3
f. Other complications	1	2	3

36. What type of help is available for these other family members in your community?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Crisis Shelter	1	2	3
b. Police	1	2	3
c. Second Stage Housing	1	2	3
d. Counseling	1	2	3
e. A/A	1	2	3
f. Other	1	2	3
g. None	1	2	3

37. Approximately, how many people in your community believe that, “ Family Violence is just something you have to put up with? “

A Few	1
About ½	2
Many	3
Most	4
Don't Know	5

38. Who do you think should be involved in helping people who are experiencing family violence?

	Yes?	No?	Don't Know?
a. Relatives	1	2	3
b. Friends	1	2	3
c. Elders	1	2	3
d. Community Members	1	2	3
e. Community Leaders	1	2	3
f. Police	1	2	3
g. Social Service Agencies	1	2	3
h. Church	1	2	3

39. What do you think could or should be done to prevent family violence in your community?

40. Please list four of the services which you think would be of help to families in your Community experiencing family violence.

	Yes
a. A crisis home	1
b. More policing	1
c. More effective policing/laws	1
d. Legal assistance	1
e. More housing	1
f. Community education	1
g. Transportation out of community	1
h. Financial assistance	1
i. A community response team	1
j. Family violence social service agency	1
k. Counseling for all persons involved	1
l. Community based self-help groups	1

41. Do you think family violence is increasing in your community?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

42. Do you think a family violence education program would benefit your community?

Yes? 1 No? 2 Don't Know? 3

43. Who do you think should participate in a family violence education program?

Yes?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| a. Families experiencing violence | 1 |
| b. Service Providers | 1 |
| c. Community Leaders | 1 |
| d. Community members in general | 1 |
| e. Others | 1 |

44. Of the following types of information, which are the four most important to include in an education program for your community?

Yes?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| a. Legal | 1 |
| b. Resources available | 1 |
| c. Health | 1 |
| d. Community Responsibility/Action | 1 |
| e. Prevention | 1 |
| f. Effects of Family Violence | 1 |
| g. Others | 1 |

45. What do you think would be the most effective way to provide an education program for your community?

Yes?

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Films/Videos | 1 |
| b. Radio programs | 1 |
| c. Community workshops | 1 |
| d. Community meetings | 1 |
| e. Conferences | 1 |
| f. Guest (resource) speakers | 1 |
| g. Training for community service workers | 1 |
| h. Other | 1 |

46. Have you ever attended a work shop or received training about family violence?

Yes? 1 No? 2

47. Does your knowledge and understanding of family violence come from:

- | | | | | |
|--|------|---|-----|---|
| a. Knowing people involved with family violence? | Yes? | 1 | No? | 2 |
| b. Hearing about people involved with family violence? | Yes? | 1 | No? | 2 |

48. Have you ever experienced family violence? Yes? 1 No? 2**49. Have you any other comments or additional information to offer about family violence that has not been covered in this questionnaire?****50. Would you be willing to answer a more detailed questionnaire about family violence?** Yes? 1 No? 2

If yes, please indicate your name and address so that we may send you a questionnaire. OR, request one from the President of your local.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE IN THIS RESEARCH.

AGENCIES INTERVIEWED

Anduhyuan Inc. 106 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2T8 (416) 920-1492
An Aboriginal Crisis Centre, Elizabeth Jocko.

***Atanlos**, 81 Ridout Street, London, Ontario (519) 432-2207 Pauline Doxtator.

Beendigan, 239 N. Syndicate Avenue, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7A 3X9 (807) 622-5101
Aboriginal Crisis Center, Louise Bannon, Maria Linklater, Josephine Mandamin.

***CAN-AM Indian Friendship Center**, 1755 Wayandotte St. Windsor, Ontario
(519) 252-3331 Sharon George.

***Chatham-Kent Community and Family Services**, (519) 359-6221 Jim Whitehead.

***Clarissa Manor Recovery Home**, 1420 8th St. N., Kenora, Ontario P9N 2S3
(807) 468-3667 A home for women with alcohol problems. Debbie Steele.

***Community Counseling for Addictions**, St. Joseph Health Center, 21 Wosley St. Canary,
Ontario P9N 3N7 (807) 468-6099 Rosalyn Copenace.

Contact North, P.O. Box 389 Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 4W1 (807) 475-8741 Toronto
Brian Beaton.

***Del-Art Manor**, 102 Government Road W., P.O. Box 110, (807) 547-2125.
A recovery home for men with alcohol problems, Cliff Coulis.

***Design for a New Tomorrow**, 217 King St., St. Catherines, Ontario (416) 684-1223
Counseling programs. Gaye Musclemen, Jean Reill.

***First Step**, Catholic Family Development Center, 208 S. Archibald St., Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7E 1G3 (807) 623-2218. A counseling program for abusive men. Charles Castlemen.

***Geneva House**, 224 Elm St. W., Sudbury, Ontario P3C 1V3 (705) 674-2210
A Crisis Home for women. Donna Bowes-Chezzie.

Heron Bay Band Alcohol and Drug Prevention Program, General Delivery, Heron Bay,
Ontario P0T 1R0 (807) 229-1329 Delores Courchene.

***Hoshizaki House**, 146 Van Horne Avenue, Dryden, Ontario P8N 2B7 (807) 223-3226
A Crisis Home for women. Judy Smith.

Indian Traveling College, RR # 3, Cornwall Island, Ontario K6H 5R7 (613) 932-9452
Ernie Benedict.

***Key North**, 66 Elm Street, Sudbury, Ontario (705) 674-1074. Catherine Bedeans.

MacDiarmid Native Women's Group, General Delivery, MacDiarmid, Ontario P0T 2B0
(807) 885-3211.

Ma-Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre, 2nd Floor, 531 Notre Dame Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1S2 (204) 774-6531. Family Services to Aboriginal people. Bev Bear.

***Manotsaywin Nanotuojig**, P.O. Box 485 Postal Station B, Sudbury, Ontario
(705) 675-0608. Lucy Rice

Mental Health Association, Cindy Hendrickson.

Moose Factory Band, Moose Factory, Ontario. Lawrence Jeffries.

Nameris Native Men's Residence, 14 Vaughan Road, Toronto, Ontario M6G 2N1
(416) 652-0334. Alan Jamieson.

***N'Amerind Friendship Centre**, 260 Colborne St. London, Ontario N6B 2S6. Donna Johnson.

Native Clan Sex Offenders Assessment Program, Forensic Behavioral Management Clinic, Room 202, 254 Edmonton St. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3Y4 (204) 943-7357.

Native Community Crisis Team, 37 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S9
(416) 923-1670. Debbie Pegahmahgohbo.

Native Women's Resource Centre, 245 Gerrard St. E., Toronto, Ontario M5A 2G1
(416) 963-9963.

***Ne'Chee Friendship Centre**, 41 Matheson St. S., P.O. Box 241, Canary, Ontario P9N 3X3
(807) 468-5440. Randy Councillor.

***Nishnawbe Gamik Friendship Centre**, 52 King St. Sioux Lookout, Ontario
(807) 737-7903. Joe Meekis.

***N'Swakamok Friendship Centre**, 66 Elm St., Sudbury, Ontario (705) 674-2128. Lauretta Orkimaw, Julie Ozawagosh, Pat Rogerson, Michael Yauthair, Margaret Yordon.

***Ojibway Tribal Family Services**, 512 1st. Ave. S., Canary, Ontario P9N 1W5
(807) 468-4533. Conn Wossacase.

***Patricia Centre for Children and Youth**, 54 Kirkpatrick Ave. Dryden, Ontario
(807) 223-5201. Ann Sigmua. Susan Vincent.

***Payukotayno, James Bay and Hudson Bay Family Services**, P.O. Box 336, Moosonee, Ontario P0L 1Y0 (705) 336-2229. Alex Gunner.

Pedahbun Lodge, 1330 King St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5H 3L7. A resource centre for alcohol and family abuse. Banakonda Kennedy-Kisk.

***Pines Community Resource Centre**, 506 1st. St. S., Canary, Ontario P9N 1C9
(807) 468-7207. A half-way house for men. Al Spendlow.

***STEP (Short Term Emergency Program)**, Box 268, Canary, Ontario P9N 3N3
(807) 548-4143. Sarah Borsfia.

Tikinagan Child and Family Services, Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Sarah McKay, Wally McKay, Lydia Shermen, Vivian Green.

***Wabigoon Metis Association**, P.O. Box 16, Wabigoon, Ontario (807) 938-6981.
Loren Mitchell.

Wa-Ne-Puh-Nud, 1114 Queen St. E., Toronto, Ontario M5M 1K1. (416) 461-3230.
Nancy Martin.

***Weechahewin Centre**, Box 127, Moosonee, Ontario P0L 1Y0 (705) 336-2456 Segan Ferris.

***West Bay Band**, West Bay Reserve. (705) 377-5347. Theodore Debussige, Andrea McGraw.

***Wicshan**, 54 Fair Avenue, Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Resource Centre and Emergency Shelter. Chandia Jung.

Whitesands Band, Box 68, Armstrong, Ontario (807) 584-2177. Alfred Lachiwette.

***Women's Place Canary**, 503 3rd. St. N., Canary, Ontario (807) 468-9095. Jane Bishop.

*** Indicates those agencies who participated in the survey as seen in the Report. The other agencies mentioned were interviewed through conversations.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM “ ABORIGINAL FAMILY VIOLENCE AND MATRIMONIAL
PROPERTY STANDARDS ON INDIAN RESERVES “ REPORT**

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The high incidence of family violence in Aboriginal communities, and its impact on Aboriginal women – who are essentially trapped and isolated because of complex community problems and Canadian legal standards – requires urgent action. The Government of Ontario, along with the Federal and Provincial Governments in Canada, must discuss with Aboriginal peoples, and specifically Aboriginal women, the desired options to remedy the situation. A number of specific recommendations for the Government of Ontario have been formulated arising from the research and consultation undertaken in preparation of this report. The following recommendations require concentrated inter-departmental attention and response:

1. The Government of Ontario should provide immediate financial support for the Ontario Native Women’s Association to enable the association to design and establish shelters and support services (including a rehabilitation program, education program, and support for children of battered women), for Aboriginal women in the province.
2. The Government of Ontario should assist the Ontario Native Women’s Association in developing a model Band Council by-law or community law which will ensure that Aboriginal women can gain exclusive occupation of the matrimonial home in situations of family violence.
3. The Government of Ontario should encourage the Federal Minister of Indian Affairs to issue all Certificates of Possession for reserve land jointly to couples cohabiting on an Indian reserve.
4. The Government of Ontario should support the constitutional recognition of the right to self-government of Aboriginal people in order for Aboriginal communities to develop standards to deal with problems, such as family violence, in ways which are appropriate to their history, culture, and future aspirations.
5. The Government of Ontario should distribute this Report to Aboriginal organizations and communities in Ontario, and to the Federal and Provincial Governments.

TIKINAGAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
THERAPEUTIC RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM FOR MEN

Tikinagan Child and Family Service

- Located in Sioux Lookout zone
- Representative of each Tikinagan Community
- Social problems interwoven with family violence
- Children and social services
- Women in Crisis – a family shelter in Sioux Lookout

Current System and Its Effects on the Abusers

- Victimized the victims in the attempt to provide a safer refuge
- “Ambivalence to challenge “ the right “ of men to abuse”
- By concentration on victims, it tends to absolve men of actions
- Double trauma: Violence plus leaving home, just when the victims need their own community most for support, now they must leave and go to a strange environment
- Often they go from rural or small urban communities to larger urban centres and encounter culture shock
- If incarcerated, men go back into communities, abuse, and in a few cases, have murdered
- Usually men are left without accounting for their consequences
- Ninety percent return to their homes

Project Principles

- Everyone has a right to live in a violence-free home, traditional Native values are needed, family violence in an individual, family and community concern; therefore individual, family and community part of solution, ensure safety of women and children, programs for men are not a substitute for good programs for women, children and community, men can control their actions, need Native Elders, evaluate program, flexible approach which is culturally sensitive

Overall Project Goals

- Decrease family violence, build healthy Native families using traditional Native value, strengthening band’s ability to deal with family violence, education so perpetrators take responsibility, support so perpetrators can take on new behavior and determine effectiveness of residential programs
- Shelters for men don’t replace those for women but the hope in future women won’t have to use shelter system
- Supported by Chiefs and Elders
- Abuse services should be linked to better substance abuse services as alcohol is often tied to violence, more so than in non-Native culture
- Community consultation and education, community resource staff team to help bands and Elders
- One year, operational phase is two years
- Follow up and evaluation system

Rationale

- Maintain family unit in community but ensure the safety of wife and children
- Four trained community resource staff and co-ordinator are the Special Family Violence Prevention Team
- One resource staff to each tribal council, give direct intervention, train band employees and develop local resources, community education
- Develop treatment program
- Six week therapeutic program, three weeks separated and three weeks together with family in residency
- Funds and program operation determined in first year to pilot project, third year evaluation

Operating Phase, First 12 months

- Effective approach to community violence
- Community education
- Residential treatment program for men

Operating Phase, Second 12 months

- Therapy and counseling for men
- Back up service for community workers

Building Phase, Third 12 months

- Residence for eight people and staff, resource center, housing for family in final component of program in conjunction with local band and council
- Development phase, Program Advisory Committee, training program, recruitment and training, co-operation with other agencies
- Community education, maximum exposure with maximum assistance
- \$ 380,820.00 total budget for development phase

Therapeutic Goals

- Men brought back into contact with family at the right time. However they must first:
 1. Understand their own behavior
 2. Accept responsibility for their actions and behavior
 3. Learn new skills and behavior
 4. Personal goal setting
 5. Positive family relationship

Program Cycle

1. Referral and Intake
 - By court order or by community resource person
2. Assessment
 - Interviews by them, spouses, Elders on Advisory Committee as to their needs
3. Community
 - Meeting with resource person

4. Linkages
 - Referral and counselor and/or Elder of home community if possible
5. Orientation
 - Family interview, physical examination, individual session with program director and Elders, introductory group session, individual time, wilderness activities
6. Curriculum
 - a. Self Awareness and Responsibility
 - Individual and group counseling, peer confrontation and sharing, self-expression in art and role playing, exploring traditional Native values and guidance of Elders
 - b. Self Esteem and Skills Development
 - Skills for life, coping, communication, interpersonal, parenting, anger control, traditional teaching
 - c. Elective Programming
 - Determination of specialized interests and needs, vocational testing and counseling, academic upgrading, group and individual sessions, substance abuse counseling and other specialized programs
7. Personal Goal Setting
 - Interpersonal relationships, vocation, education
8. Healing and Family Life
 - Family session, including role playing, counseling, practicing new behaviors
9. Follow up
 - Establish follow up plan with community resource persons, regular case conferences with resource people, regular contact with participants and community visits

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The Artist, Gail Bressette is a Chippewa Woman from Kettle Pint Reserve, near London, Ontario. Presently she is a student at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and is the mother of three children.