|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ADVOCATES DO...*** Advocate for the personal sovereignty and safety of women and their children, including provision of safe space and any resources necessary for women/survivors to regain control of their lives.
* Ask, listen to, believe and respectfully act on what survivors state they need and want in a trauma-informed, culturally appropriate way.
* Clearly and persistently send the message: violence is unacceptable, battering is a crime and never the fault of the woman who has been battered, or other survivors.
* Validate the individuality, experiences, decisions and strengths of women and other survivors who have been battered.
* Act and treat women who are battered, all survivors, as relatives.
* Model courage and resistance in the face of oppression, intimidation and fear.
* Provide leadership ensuring women’s safety is a priority in coordinated community responses that promote and enhance the spiritual and cultural traditions of the sacredness of women & children.
* Focus attention on the intent of safety and integrity of women & renewal of traditional life ways as guiding principles throughout systems dealing with violence against women and other oppressed groups.
* Provide expertise through the voices of women who are battered and their children, other survivors on issues regarding violence against women within justice, law enforcement, social & medical systems.
* Ensure all who have been battered/ sexually assaulted have 24-hour access to support, accurate information, crisis intervention and other advocacy.
* Educate personnel within systems about the most effective responses to violence regarding batterers, victims and at-risk family members, prioritizing victim safety and offender accountability.
* Be conscious of the educational role within all advocate activities.
* Remain accountable to the woman/survivor who has been battered/sexually assaulted including maintaining confidentiality.
 | **ADVOCATES *DO NOT*...*** Act without the expressed informed consent or participation of the woman who has been battered or withhold or create barriers to safety & resources because we judged her "unworthy" in some way.
* Believe we should mind-read what she needs or wants, or assume we know better than she does.
* Minimize or blame her for the violence, collude/make excuses for the batterer's behavior, or treat the violence as a private or mental health issue.
* Treat all women the same, as incapable of making decisions, "sick" or incompetent.
* Label or act as if women/survivors who are battered are "cases," "those women," clients or patients.
* Get women/survivors to cooperate with other agencies or "follow rules" not honoring her safety or sovereignty.
* Allow task forces, meetings or initiatives to focus on the behavior of women/survivor, instead of accountability of offenders and of systems.
* Diverting attention to mental health or other issues not directly related to battering as violent crime, safety and Native women's sovereignty, or that reinforce external or internal oppression.
* Speak for or on behalf of battered women, unless they are not safe enough to do so themselves, or without their express, informed permission.
* Ignore or create barriers that prevent or limit access to safety or resources, including substance use or trauma reactions.
* Forget violence ends through social change that includes systems work focused on accountability for provision of safety and offender accountability.
* Dismiss the reality that conflicts, and creation of working relationships are "teachable moments" for all involved, including advocates.
* Allow limited budgets, policy, funders or our "check signers" to compromise advocating for the safety and sovereignty of women/survivors who have been battered.

**NOTE**: Up to 96% of survivors of battering are female, so the *words woman, women, she* and *her* are used in these documents. Men who are victims of battering should receive the same kinds of advocacy and resources in ways that meet their needs. Survivors who are LBGTQ2S also have the right to advocacy and resources that address challenges and barriers posed by heterosexism. Sacred Circle, Nat’l Resource Ctr. To End Violence Against Native Women |