HOW TO PROVIDE WOMEN/SURVIVOR SAFETY & BATTERER ACCOUNTABILITY

WHEN THE BATTERER USES THESE TACTICS

… Physical / Sexual Assault

- Provide safe space and confidential medical care
- Have the batterer arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to the full extent of the law
- Provide easy access to protection and restraining orders, ensuring enforcement
- Assess for possible threats from his family or friends
- Acknowledge the pain and sense of betrayal that comes from victimization
- Assist and talk with survivors from a place of compassion and validate her/his strengths

… Male Privilege

- Act in a way that validates the sacredness of women
- Express the right of women to move through the world with respect and compassion
- Avoid collusion - confront the batterer's belief about his right to control his partner
- Respectfully confront him about his behavior
- Actively support women's expertise about themselves and their expressed needs

… Isolation

- Provide respectful support and assistance to women/survivors
- Provide outreach and easy access to services, including transportation, childcare, etc.
- Remove any barriers to her /him regaining power and control over her/his life
- Deal directly and immediately with ongoing threats of violence
- Create and enforce sanctions for interfering with her moving freely and without fear

… Intimidation

- Allow advocates to accompany survivor
- Shield her/him from this tactic, being aware that it includes looks or gestures from him, his relatives or friends
- Avoid use of position as an authority figure to reinforce intimidation tactics
- Communicate clearly that intimidation is unacceptable by naming the behavior and enforcing consequences

… Emotional Abuse

- Treat and name survivor and their children as relatives, not as "cases" or other objectifying labels
- Do not make survivor justify their actions or requests for assistance or resources
- Validate her/his thoughts, feelings, actions and decisions
- Provide accurate information that lets her know the violence is never her fault, she did not cause and cannot alone stop the abuser's violence
- See and speak to the best in survivor
- Support her/his healing in her/his own way
- Speak with her/him as a friend, honestly and respectfully

… Minimizing, Lying and Blaming

- Avoid collusion with the batterer by buying into his stories or manipulation of systems to maintain control of his partner
- Believe in survivor and what she/he says
- Understand the dynamics of battering to avoid minimizing or blaming her/him for his behavior
- Focus on the truth and confront him about his dishonesty
- Find ways to hold batterer accountable and change behavior.

… Using the Children

- Act in ways that reflects the understanding that mother abuse is child abuse
- Understand that if we protect women, they can protect their children
- Do not allow the batterer to use children as weapons or means of access for violence against non-offending parent through custody or visitation
- Provide the safety and resources for the mother and children to stay together
- Know that removing children from their mother for "failure to protect" revictimizes children and mothers
- Create laws that asserts that battering is child abuse

… Economic Abuse

- Provide free, easily accessible resources and services
- Acknowledge that poverty, especially lack of housing, causes women and their children to return to the batterer or be homeless
- Create appropriate resources without barriers

… Coercion and Threats

- Create safety and comfort for women to express themselves and do things freely
- Know that batterer's past use of violence may continue to affect survivor
- Affirm her thoughts, feelings and opinions
- Understand that using position and authority to make survivor do what you want her/him to do is disrespectful and abusive
- Create and enforce laws that validate survivor's rights and hold the batterer accountable for his violence

… Cultural Abuse

- Provide support and accurate information
- Understand our role as relatives to all things in Creation
- Be responsible for our role as relatives by holding ourselves accountable to women who have been victimized, children and other relatives
- Respect survivors Path as being equally important as our own
- Honor survivor privacy without it being an excuse for inaction

… Ritual Abuse

- Validate survivors fears and concerns
- Provide accurate information
- Provide whatever she/he needs to practice her/his spiritual ways
- Practice our spirituality so our relationship with our sisters reflects humility and self-understanding

Product of Sacred Circle, A Project of Cangleska, Inc.; edited NIWRC 2019

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER